



Scoping Report Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plans and Environmental Impact Statement

Prepared for

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Las Vegas, Nevada

by

SWCA Environmental Consultants, Inc.
November 2002

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) conducted public scoping meetings to solicit input and comments on the development of Comprehensive Conservation Plans and an Environmental Impact Statement (CCPs/EIS) for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Complex). The Complex consists of Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (AHME), Desert National Wildlife Range (DEST), Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MOVA) and Pahrnat National Wildlife Refuge (PAHR). The meetings were held as follows:

Sept. 16, 2002	7-9 pm	Moapa Community Center, Moapa Valley, NV
Sept. 17, 2002	7-9 pm	Fish and Wildlife Service Office, Las Vegas, NV
Sept. 18, 2002	4-6 pm	Amargosa Valley Multi-purpose Building, Amargosa Valley, NV
Sept. 18, 2002	7-9 pm	Bob Ruud Community Center, Pahrump, NV
Sept. 19, 2002	7-9 pm	Alamo Annex Building, Alamo, NV.

An Interagency scoping meeting was held August 28, 2002. Cooperating agencies and agencies with interest in and/or responsibilities for resources within the Complex were invited to provide comments on issues that should be analyzed during development of the CCPs/EIS. This report contains the details of those scoping meetings and includes the oral and written comments received and the analysis of those comments. The following sections describe the process of soliciting public and agency input in refining the scope of the CCPs/EIS (Section 2.0), and provide a summary of the comments received during the scoping process (Section 3.0) and next steps in the process (Section 4.0). The appendices contain the information provided to the public and agencies during the scoping process and the written and oral comments received.

1.1 BACKGROUND

In 1997, Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (Act), the most recent legislation to provide significant new guidance for the management of the Refuge System. The Act included a new statutory mission statement and directed the Service to manage the Refuge System as a national system of lands and waters devoted to conserving wildlife and maintaining biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of ecosystems.

This law required the Service to initiate comprehensive conservation planning for each refuge. It also stated that certain wildlife-dependent recreational uses are appropriate activities on refuges and strengthened the compatibility determination process for assuring that no refuge uses conflict with refuge purposes or the Refuge System mission.

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

The Act provides the Service with guidance for managing the refuges in a way that supports two important principles of the Act. These are: (1) maintain biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the refuge system and (2) facilitate compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.

Every refuge will develop a CCP that will outline management goals, objectives, and strategies. It will be a flexible, "living" document that will be updated every 15 years. The accompanying EIS, will describe the

management alternatives considered and their effects on the environment. The EIS is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508). The EIS scoping process was developed in accordance with the CEQ guidance for scoping under NEPA.

1.2 PUBLIC SCOPING

In order to prepare an effective NEPA compliance document, the scope of the document must be determined; that is, what will be covered, and in what detail. Planning of this kind is a required and essential component of the EIS preparation. The scoping process is to be open to the public, state and local governments (including tribal governments), and affected federal agencies. The objectives of scoping are:

- Provide meaningful and timely opportunities for public input.
- Inform and educate the public.
- Identify key resource and land use issues relative to each refuge.
- Identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant.
- Consider and evaluate issues raised by interested parties to assist in the preparation of the CCPs.
- Provide clear, easily understood, factual information to potentially affected parties.
- Involve as many interested parties as possible in the environmental review process.
- Invite the participation by local government, the State of Nevada, Federal agencies, and Native American tribes.
- Consider public comments throughout the decision-making and review process.

The public scoping meetings were conducted to encourage the public to bring issues and concerns to the attention of the Complex. These meetings were held during a 60-day public comment period to allow the public time to identify issues and concerns for inclusion in the review. Copies of the sign-in sheets and a summary table of issues/comments are provided in Appendices A and B respectively.

The Interagency scoping meeting was conducted to identify other agencies with responsibility for or special interest in refuge resources and/or land use management strategies which will be analyzed as a part of the CCPs/EIS process. The Interagency scoping meeting identified issues for each refuge as well as issues that encompass all four refuges. A list of the participants and a summary table of issues/comments are provided in Appendices C and D.

1.3 INITIAL SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS

In the Notice of Intent (NOI), published in the Federal Register on August 21, 2002 (see Appendix E), the study area was identified as the Complex, located in Clark, Lincoln, and Nye counties, in southern Nevada. The NOI stated that the CCPs/EIS process would help to identify potential issues, management actions and concerns; significant problems or impacts; and opportunities to resolve them. During development of the CCPs, the Service will comply with the provisions of NEPA through concurrent preparation of an EIS that will accompany the CCPs. The draft EIS will contain a Proposed Action, No Action Alternative, and other alternatives. The alternatives will be used to define management options and compare their effects.

An extensive list of resource areas and conditions that may be considered for evaluation in the CCPs/EIS was established using the General Environmental Checklist (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service NEPA Reference Handbook, Checklist Appendices). These are outlined in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1
Resource Areas That May be Evaluated in the CCPs/EIS

Climate	Wildlife , including threatened/endangered species, species diversity/abundance, game/non-game species, and pests/pathogens/vectors/ predators/feral or exotic animals.
Air Quality	Social Considerations , including archaeologic/historic sites, educational/recreational opportunities, and public access.
Topography , including relief and cuts/fills.	Economic , including funding, staffing, commercial/industrial activities, taxes and property values.
Geology , including landslides/earthquakes, minerals, energy resource depletion/conservation, radioactive and toxic substances/heavy metals, erosion/deposition, siltation, soil quality, and paleontological resources.	Land Use , including plans/policies/controls, development/growth, farmland/open space/natural areas, fire management, and transportation/ facilities/public utilities.
Hydrology , including surface and groundwater quality and quantity, absorption/drainage, flooding, and hydro/geothermal energy source.	Social Values , including quality of life, community cohesion, residents/residences, population change, human health/safety, public services, environmental justice, and national defense.
Vegetation , including threatened/endangered species, critical wildlife habitat, species diversity/abundance, noxious weeds/exotic plants/pathogens, and fire management.	Aesthetics , including scenery, noise, and odor.

2.0 SCOPING MEETING SUMMARY

The scoping meetings were held to explain the CCPs/EIS process, and to solicit public comments on development of the CCPs/EIS. The scoping process consisted of six elements:

- Publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register.
- Distribution of a Public Notice/Press Release to federal, state, and local agencies and officials, local and regional media, and other interested parties in newspapers near the four refuge areas.
- Agency coordination letters.
- Interagency scoping meeting.
- Public scoping meeting.
- Review, reporting and categorizing of comments received.

Each of these elements is described in more detail in the following subsections.

2.1 PUBLIC NOTICES

The NOI to prepare the CCPs/EIS for the Complex was published in the Federal Register on August 21, 2002 (see Appendix E). The NOI initiated the scoping process and included information pertaining to the individual refuges, and other supplemental information supporting the Complex directive to prepare the CCPs/EIS. In addition, the NOI identified the Service as the lead federal agency. The NOI encouraged the public to help identify potential issues, management actions and concerns; significant problems or impacts; and opportunities to resolve them through participation in public scoping.

Additionally, the NOI advised that the Service would be completing a wilderness review of Service managed lands to determine if any lands are suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Service will also complete new compatibility determinations or re-evaluate existing compatibility determinations as a part of the CCP process for all individual uses, specific use programs, or groups of related uses associated with management of the Complex.

The NOI encouraged full public participation to promote open communication on the issues surrounding management of the Complex. All federal, state, and local agencies and other persons or organizations were urged to participate in the scoping process. The Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4701 North Torrey Pines, Las Vegas, NV 89130, was listed as the point of contact for further information.

On September 3rd and 4th, 2002, Planning Updates were mailed to approximately 350 members of the public. Appendix G contains a copy of Planning Update No. 1, which provides background on the purpose and need for development of the CCPs for the four refuges within the Complex and marks the progress of the CCP planning process and development of the EIS. The Public Scoping mailing list, which was used for the Planning Update, is provided in Appendix H.

On September 4, 2002, the Complex issued a news release regarding the development of the CCPs and their intent to prepare an EIS. Appendix I provides a copy of the news release and the list of recipients.

2.2 NEWSPAPER PUBLICATION OF PUBLIC NOTICE

The public notice that announced the scoping meetings for development of the CCPs/EIS was published in the Las Vegas Review Journal on September 15, 2002 (Appendix J). The notice included information on the development of CCPs/EIS, as well as the dates and locations of the public scoping meetings.

2.3 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

The public scoping meetings were held as follows:

Sept. 16, 2002	7-9 pm	Moapa Community Center, Moapa Valley, NV
Sept. 17, 2002	7-9 pm	Fish and Wildlife Service Office, Las Vegas, NV
Sept. 18, 2002	4-6 pm	Amargosa Valley Multi-purpose Building, Amargosa Valley, NV
Sept. 18, 2002	7-9 pm	Bob Ruud Community Center, Pahrump, NV
Sept. 19, 2002	7-9 pm	Alamo Annex Building, Alamo, NV

The sites were chosen based on their location and relative proximity to the one of the four refuges. The scoping meetings were held to explain the CCP and NEPA process requirements and to solicit comments on the initial development of these documents.

At the entrance to each meeting, each attendee signed the attendance roster and was given a package of information that included an agenda, information on each refuge, and a blank comment sheet for written comments (see Appendix K). Appendix A contains the attendance rosters for each of the five public meetings. In addition to soliciting written comments, attendees also were informed that they would have an opportunity to speak or add input at any time during the meetings.

Dick Birger, the Complex Project Leader, opened the meeting and introduced the various parties involved in the meeting. Mark Pelz, a refuge planner with the NWR California/Nevada Refuge Planning Office, presented background information on the CCP process, and explained the need to develop the plans. Mr. Birger presented information on the four refuges and identified management issues. Appendix L contains a copy of the two slide presentations.

Kim Hutson, Project Manager, and Ken MacDonald, Project Sponsor, with SWCA Environmental Consultants, assisted in the facilitation of the comment portion of the meeting. Comments were solicited from the participants and issues were identified and written onto large flip charts as they were spoken. Appendix M contains a summary table of written comments received from the public, and Appendix N contains copies of written comments received from the public.

All attendees were informed that the Complex would formally accept written comments until the end of the 60-day comment period on October 19, 2002. However, attendees were invited to continue providing written or oral input through letters, e-mails, websites, and/or direct phone calls to Complex staff until publication of the draft CCPs/EIS.

2.4 AGENCY COORDINATION/INTERAGENCY SCOPING MEETING

Two letters were mailed to federal, state and local agencies having responsibility for or special interest in refuge resources and/or land use management strategies which are being analyzed as a part of the CCPs/EIS process. The first letter (Appendix O) was a notice of the Service's intention to prepare the CCPs/EIS. The second (Appendix P) was an invitation to the Interagency Scoping meeting which was held on Wednesday, August 28, 2002, at the Service Interagency Conference rooms A and B located at 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada. The site was chosen based on its central location and accessibility to other interested agencies.

Items to be addressed in this meeting were identified as:

- General background information on the CCP/EIS process.
- Scoping issues and concerns relative to the outside agencies' responsibilities in and adjacent to the four affected refuges.
- Data collection and information sharing.
- Coordination and commitment of interested agencies in developing the CCPs/EIS over the next 24 months.

At the Interagency Conference room entrance, each attendee signed the attendance roster and was given a package of information that included an agenda, refuge fact sheets, working maps, a copy of Planning Update No.1, public outreach scoping timeline, and project schedule (Appendix Q). Prior to the meeting, each agency had been mailed a Response Form soliciting comments (Appendix R). There were 26 agency representatives in attendance (Appendix C).

Dick Birger, the Complex Project Leader, opened the meeting and introduced the various parties involved in the meeting. Mark Pelz, a refuge planner with the NWR California/Nevada Refuge Planning Office, presented background information on the CCP process, and explained the need to develop the plans. Mr. Birger presented information on the four refuges and identified management issues. Appendix L contains a copy of the two slide presentations.

Kim Hutson, Project Manager, and Ken MacDonald, Project Sponsor, with SWCA Environmental Consultants, assisted in the facilitation of the comment portion of the meeting. Comments were solicited from the participants and issues were identified and written onto large flip charts as they were spoken. Appendix D contains a summary table of oral and written comments received from the agencies. Appendix S contains copies of the written comments received from the agencies.

An additional meeting was held with staff members of the Nevada Division of Wildlife, (NDOW), on September 23, 2002, at their Headquarters in Reno, Nevada. The purpose of that meeting was to discuss coordination and other topics relative to the Service's CCP efforts in Nevada. Much of the discussion was relative to NDOW's involvement in the Complex CCP effort currently underway.

3.0 SCOPING COMMENTS

The scoping process resulted in the submission of comments from 53 members of the public and 25 federal, state, or local agency staff members. The comments received were submitted to the Complex via written correspondence, e-mail, and oral comments recorded on flipcharts at the scoping meetings. Public and Interagency comments summarized in the respective appendices tables were captured verbatim as well as transcribed directly from the written communication. The following section discusses the process of reviewing, organizing, evaluating, and recording the comments.

3.1 REVIEW, ORGANIZATION AND EVALUATION OF SCOPING COMMENTS

Scoping comments were identified through review of the scoping meeting flip chart notes and written submissions. The Service received 192 oral and written public comments. Nine letters/emails/comment forms were received from members of the public containing multiple issue comments. Likewise, eleven letters/comment forms were submitted by agencies, for a total of 214 written and oral comments. Comments were reviewed and categorized according to the Service-designated 12 resource areas as defined by the Service's NEPA Reference Handbook and CCP policy. Table 1-1 contains a summary of resources of concern. Table 3-1 provides a count of the comments for the top 12 issues. The issues are separated by the Interagency and public scoping meetings. The public and Interagency comments are provided in Appendices B and D, respectively.

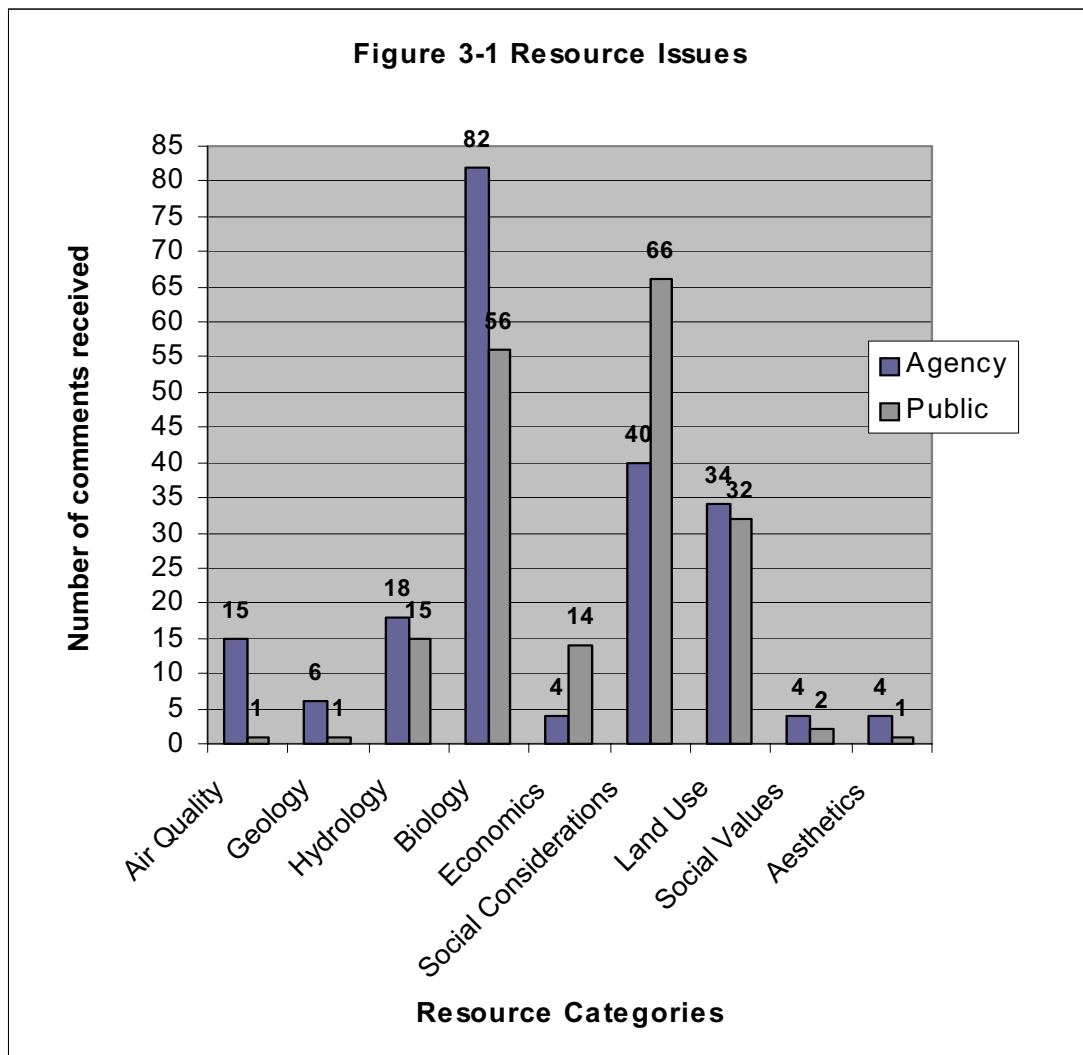
Table 3-1 Resource Issues					
	Number			Number	
Issue	Agenc	Publi	Issue	Agenc	Publi
Air Quality	15	1	Social Considerations	40	66
Geology	6	1	Archaeology	12	1
Hydrology	18	15	Recreation	8	30
Biology (total)	82	56	Education	7	22
Vegetation	27	23	Public Access	13	13
<i>Noxious Weeds</i>	6	5	Land Use (total)	34	32
<i>Threatened/Endangered</i>	1	1	Resource Management	19	5
Wildlife (total)	55	33	Adjacent Land Use Impacts	4	3
<i>Game</i>	10	14	Access/Roads (see above)	-	9
<i>Non-game</i>	13	13	Growth Impacts	7	4
<i>Threatened/Endangered</i>	10	2	Grazing	-	3
<i>Aquatic</i>	22	4	Wilderness	4	8
Economics (total)	4	14	Social Values	4	2
Staffing	2	7	Aesthetics	4	1
Funding	2	7			

Figure 3-1 illustrates graphically the totals of the top 12 issues. Comments are organized separately by agency and public input. Biological Resources (wildlife and plant species, threatened and endangered species) with 138 comments, Social Considerations (cultural/historic resources, recreation, education, public access) with 106 comments, and Land Use issues (resources management, adjacent land use impacts, access/roads, growth impacts, grazing, wilderness) with 66 comments ranked the highest of the 12 resource categories.

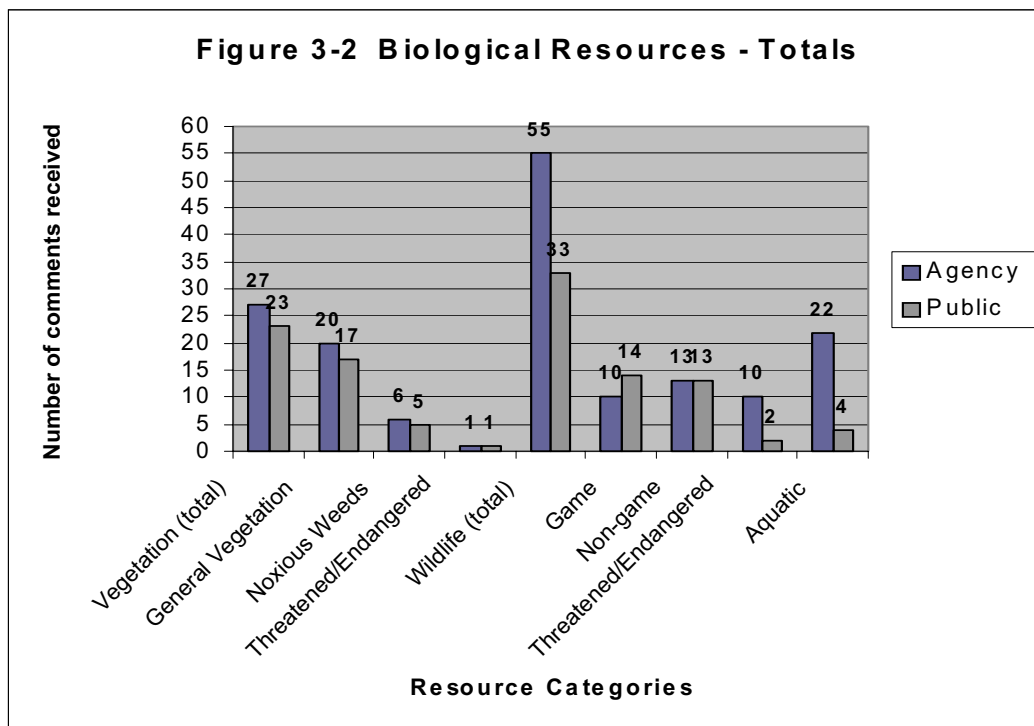
Hydrologic resources generated 33 comments which focused on surface water quality and quantity for both humans and natural resources as well as groundwater availability, adjacent land use practices, habitat requirements for threatened and endangered species and game species, and public health (as in swimming in pools/reservoirs).

Economics defines refuge- and surrounding community-related costs, taxes, property values, commercial activities and staffing and funding. Of the 18 comments in this category, the majority focused on refuge staffing and funding issues.

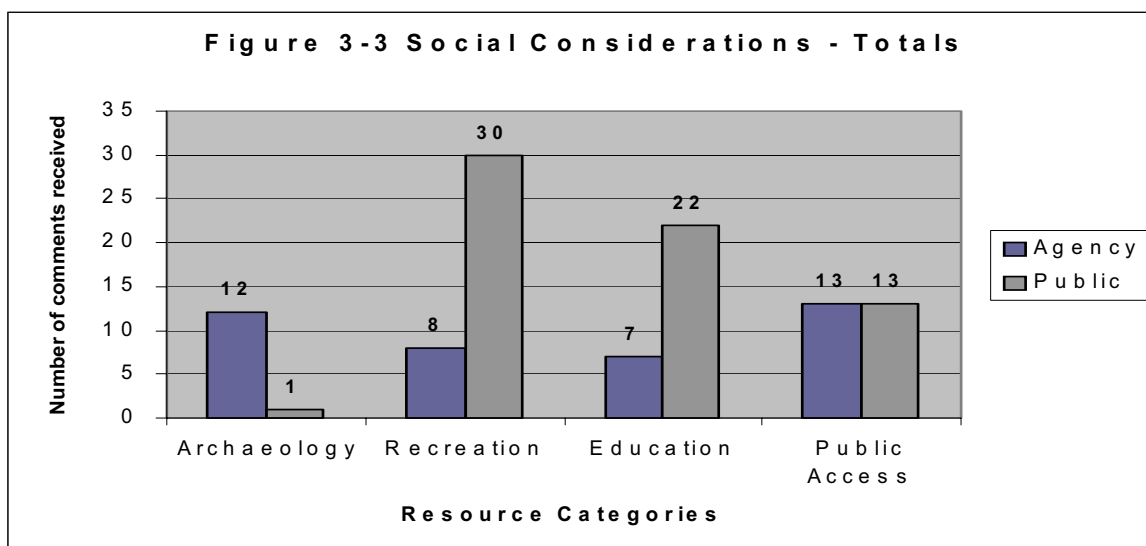
Air Quality issues received 14 comments relative to operations, maintenance, and recreational activities that could generate dust and a suite of federally-regulated particulates. Geology, Social Values (health/safety, environmental justice, population trends, etc.), and Aesthetics (visual, noise, odor, etc.) solicited 7, 5, and 5 comments, respectively.



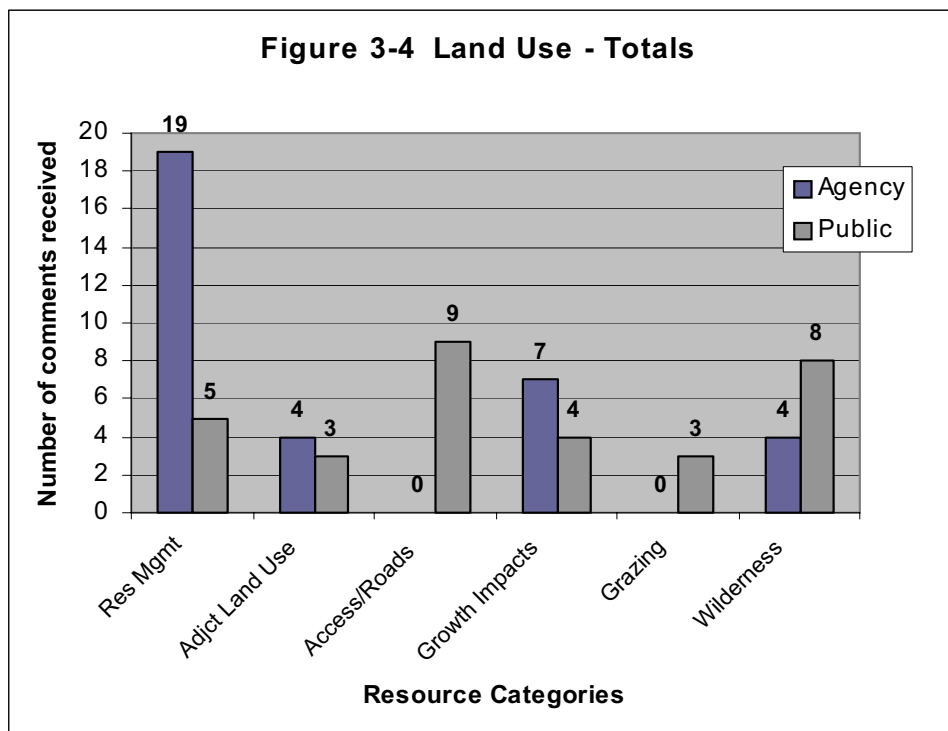
Biological resources (Figure 3-2), which can be grouped predominantly into vegetation and wildlife issues, garnered the most commentary, with a total of 138 comments. Issues ranged from invasive vegetation control, habitat restoration and maintenance, game and non-game species management, and aquatic species research.



Considerations involve management and program issues which affect the public in direct ways. These include conservation and interpretation of archaeological and historical sites and artifacts; recreation activities including, but not limited to, birding, hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography; access to these activity sites; and resource-specific as well as global information, education and interpretation. The number of comments by these topics is illustrated in Figure 3-3.



The 66 comments received on Land Use issues fell into several common categories - resources management, adjacent land use impacts, access/roads, growth impacts, and wilderness (Figure 3-4). Resource management comments ranged from appropriate use of prescribed fires for habitat restoration and maintenance to road rehabilitation and coordination of efforts with other federal land management agencies. Road maintenance, closures and development paralleled growth impact concerns.



4.0 NEXT STEPS

The Complex has completed its initial scoping/comment process. Recognizing that scoping is an iterative process, the Service will continue to give due consideration to input received throughout the development of the CCPs/EIS. Coordination will continue with regulatory agencies and the general public.

Building on the public and Interagency scoping processes input, Complex staff will develop a refuge vision, and associated goals and objectives for each refuge. These goals and objectives and variations on them will form the suite of alternatives which will be analyzed along with the Proposed Action for their impacts on the resources areas identified during scoping by the public, other agencies and Complex staff. Any alternatives considered, but determined infeasible, will be identified with an explanation as to why it was considered infeasible. All of the comments received during the initial scoping period will be considered during the CCPs/EIS process and will be evaluated using guidelines and checklists as set forth in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife NEPA Reference Handbook.

Following the issuance of this public scoping report, it is likely that informal scoping of the alternatives will take place with specific special interest groups, such as the Interagency Planning Team, Native American Tribes, and conservation and recreation organizations. Future Planning Updates, which will continue to be distributed via U.S. mail and available for viewing on the Complex website, will provide an additional avenue for sharing information and soliciting comment.

Alternatives development will be followed by analysis of the various management alternatives and defining potential impacts and mitigation opportunities. The draft EIS (DEIS) will be issued in the winter of 2004 with the public notified by publication of a formal Notice of Availability for review and comment in the Federal Register, local press outlets, and the Planning Update. A series of public comment meetings will be held in communities near the refuges. The Interagency Planning Team would also meet to provide feedback on the DEIS.

Comments received during this second public scoping/comment process will be reviewed, organized and evaluated in the same fashion as during the initial period. Comments will be incorporated in the final EIS (FEIS) as appropriate. A Final Scoping Report will be drafted and included in the FEIS as an appendix. CCPs will be finalized and published after the FEIS has been completed and a Record of Decision issued by the Environmental Protection Agency.

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC SCOPING SIGN-IN SHEETS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex			Public Scoping Meeting September 17, 2002 Desert National Wildlife Range	
NAME	AFFILIATION OR TITLE	CITY/STATE		
Lynn Stockman	Vice President, Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn	Las Vegas, NV		
Amy Sprunger-Allworth	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service			
Tim Sancerant	Dunes and Trails ATV Club	Las Vegas, NV		
Gary and Sallie Clinard	Dunes and Trails ATV Club	Las Vegas, NV		
Bill Vasconi	Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn	Las Vegas, NV		
Janell Ross				
Mark Farrar	Dunes and Trails ATV Club	Las Vegas, NV		
Austin Adamsen	Dunes and Trails ATV Club	Las Vegas, NV		
Mike Del Grosso	Nevada Division of State Lands	Carson City, NV		
Bruce Alward	WHIN	Las Vegas, NV		
Andrew Cummings	Vice President, WHIN	Las Vegas, NV		
Lisa Luptowitz	Southern Nevada Water Authority	Las Vegas, NV		
Rich Taylor	Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn	Las Vegas, NV		
Cathey Adamsen	Citizen and Dunes and Trails ATV Club	Las Vegas, NV		
Mark Trinko	OHV	Las Vegas, NV		
Robert Jay	Dunes and Trails ATV Club	Las Vegas, NV		

NAME	AFFILIATION OR TITLE	CITY/STATE
Ellis Greene	Southern Nevada Regional Trails Partnership	Las Vegas, NV
Tom Lobeck	WHIN	Las Vegas, NV
Blake Monk	Nevada United Four Wheeler ASN	Las Vegas, NV
Mike Albrecht	Dunes and Trails ATV Club	Las Vegas, NV
Glen Franice		Henderson, NV
Chaz DeMarce	concerned sportsman	Las Vegas, NV
Liz Smith-Incer	National Park Service, Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance	Las Vegas, NV
Ed Dodrill	Southern Nevada Regional Trails Partnership	Las Vegas, NV
Craig Stevenson	Nevada Department of Wildlife	Las Vegas, NV

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex			Public Scoping Meeting September 19, 2002 Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge
NAME	AFFILIATION OR TITLE	CITY/STATE	
Shawn Fairbairn	Clark County Advisory Board	Henderson, NV	
Barton Tanner	Nevada Division of Wildlife Key Pittman	Hiko, NV	
Anan Raymond	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Sherwood, OR	
Mike Halstead		Las Vegas, NV	
Mike Lauterborn		Las Vegas, NV	
Don Fidler		Alamo, NV	
Jim Logan		Alamo, NV	
Marvin Herring		Alamo, NV	
Joseph L. Sharp		Alamo, NV	
Doug Carriger	Lincoln County	Pioche, NV	
John and Liz Sander		Hiki, NV	
Tim Perkins	Lincoln County Commission	Alamo, NV	
Allan Pritcher	Overton and Lincoln County	Overton, NV	

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY TABLE

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

Public Scoping Meetings Comments - September 16-19, 2002

Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
CLIMATE		
AIR QUALITY	10	I would like to know the impact of four wheel drive and ATV, on the environment of the refuges. Taking into account air pollution, noise, fire and damage to vegetation. Also the use of these vehicle to traverse in close areas.
	8	Crystal Reservoir - Road county owned want to pave - dust/safety tine in w/ bratty habitat trails project, Lathrop Wells, etc., (NV important bird area program?)
TOPOGRAPHY		
GEOLOGY		
Mineral Potential	7	Mineral withdrawal for the DNWR Complex.
HYDROLOGY		
Surface Water		Flexible management to follow water. 9-17-02
		Guzzlers v. population number. Small versus large game; add more small game guzzlers. 9-17-02
		Guzzler maintenance. 9-17-02
		Water quality at PAHR; cattle ranching. 9-17-02
		PAHR ponds lined? 9-19-02
		Consider adding silt/other to slow/stop infiltration. 9-19-02
	1	Measures needed to maintain or restore water quantity and quality should be addressed in the Plan.
	3	Allow human contact with water sources in the Desert and mountain areas.
Water Rights		What are the water use impacts off-refuge (i.e., Coyote Springs, South 15). 9-16-02
		Water development outside refuge - Coyote Springs - impacts/share. 9-17-02
		Pending water rights adjudication. 9-19-02
		Conversion of water use from agricultural to wildlife use - Legislate - federal/state. 9-19-02
		PAHR - buy water rights? 9-19-02
	1	The Plan should address the relationship with any existing ecosystem and/or watershed efforts being implemented by other agencies in the refuge planning areas.
	9	Water - try to obtain water for Pahrnatagat to keep the lakes full and the D/U ponds damp (very important).

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

Public Scoping Meetings Comments - September 16-19, 2002

Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES		
	1	The Plan should address restoration, protection, and enhancement of refuge habitats needed to sustain healthy populations of native fish and wildlife.
	1	The Plan should provide for development of a database of pertinent scientific information regarding refuge habitats and wildlife.
Vegetation - Threatened/Endangered	1	The Plan should address restoration of native threatened and endangered species on refuge lands.
Vegetation		Palms - are they native? Locals versus agencies ideas. 9-16-02
		Generally agreed it's ok to remove palms growing in streams/impacting fish and to trim/remove as fire hazard. 9-16-02
		Concern expressed by local fire department if palms are not managed properly. 9-16-02
		Flexibility in drought - management vis a vis hunting. 9-17-02
		Prescribed burns, especially in Middle Marsh. 9-19-02
	1	Active management to benefit wildlife should be addressed, including fire, stream restoration, weed control, and road closures.
		Agricultural land uses. 9-19-02
		Grazing as vegetation management strategy. 9-19-02
		40% of PAHR should be available for waterfowl, with water and controlled vegetation as appropriate. 9-17-02
		Fire management: establish burn frequency especially riparian; controlled burns and frequency used; access to burn areas/fires - "open roads provide fire management access", riparian versus montane. 9-17-02
	1	The Plan should address fire management on the refuges and discuss how management of vegetation, especially exotic species like cheat grass will be done.
Vegetation - Noxious Weeds		Noxious weeds at PAHR - all knapweed. 9-19-02
		Noxious weeds - knapweed. 9-17-02
		Noxious weeds - Russian olives. 9-19-02
	1	Active management to benefit wildlife should be addressed, including fire, stream restoration, weed control, and road closures.
	1	Provisions in the Plan should be made to prevent invasive species from becoming established, determine if invasive species are a problem, and if so, to identify appropriate management responses.

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

Public Scoping Meetings Comments - September 16-19, 2002

Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
Wildlife - non-game species		Refuge purpose education vis a vis feral horse removal. 9-19-02
		Feral species: wild horse, burros, dogs/cats. 9-17-02
		Wildlife observation - need additional vehicle access. 9-17-02
		Predator management, "predator" determination. 9-17-02
		Predator management - allow hunting/fishing. 9-17-02
		Guzzler maintenance. 9-19-02.
		Predator control; ravens/coyote versus pheasants/brooding. Contact animal control. 9-19-02
		Plans to reestablish fish barrier? Low maintenance/high effectiveness. 9-19-02
		Carp control. 9-19-02
		Create habitat for the fishes - refugia. 9-19-02
	1	Provisions in the Plan should be made to prevent invasive species from becoming established, determine if invasive species are a problem, and if so, to identify appropriate management responses.
	1	The Plan must identify significant problems which may adversely affect populations of wildlife on the refuge.
	10	There has been little or no work done to manage this for migratory birds (at PAHR).
Wildlife - Game Species		Guzzler access and maintenance. Accessible via horse, truck, helicopter, backpack? 9-17-02
		Comparison of maintenance costs of guzzler infrastructure vis a vis partnerships for funding. 9-17-02
		DEST: Guzzlers versus Population numbers. Small versus large game: Add more small game guzzlers. 9-17-02
		Guzzler maintenance. 9-19-02
		Budgets for bighorn sheep; water should be separate line item. 9-17-02
		Flexibility in drought - management vis a vis hunting. 9-19-02
		Refuge purposes upheld <u>and</u> maximize sportsmen/woman opportunities. 9-17-02
		Propose "smoothing" hunt boundaries to simplify. 9-17-02
		Manage PAHR in full compliance with your waterfowl management mandate. 9-17-02

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Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
		40% of PAHR should be available for waterfowl, with water controlled vegetation where appropriate. 9-17-02
		Moving/rotating hunt locations benefits waterfowl (less habituated/tame). 9-19-02
		Fishery designation for PAHR lake. 9-19-02
		Introduce turkeys. 9-19-02
		Consider PAHR as release site for geese and other species. 9-19-02
Wildlife - Threatened/Endangered		Species inventories (Section 7, Endangered Species Act) "beetle, Threatened and Endangered species. 9-17-02
	1	The Plan should address restoration of native threatened and endangered species on refuge lands.
Aquatics - Aquatic Habitats	9	Do your best to start a spraying and clean-up program for mosquito control which is critical <u>now</u> .
Aquatics - Threatened/Endangered		Refugia potential. 9-16-02
		Swimming/trade off for Threatened and Endangered Species. 9-18-02
	1	The Plan should address restoration of native threatened and endangered species on refuge lands.
SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS		
		What are the cultural relationships to springs-plants (i.e., Native American uses). 9-19-02
		Visitor Service facilities - restrooms, campgrounds, conditions/ maintenance. 9-17-02
		Refuge purposes upheld and maximize sportsmen/women opportunities. 9-17-02
		Move Corn Creek to USFWS headquarters. 9-17-02
	9	Do a survey - which has all the concerns for hunters-fisherman-R/V's and campers. (temporary).
		Historic Use - Swimming developed areas (L. Egan/E. McAllister) - describe Perkins ownership of MOVA (BBQ, camping. 9-16-02
		Swimming trade off for Threatened and Endangered species. 9-19-02
		Land use - visitor services - percent available for hunting. 9-19-02
		Current Use - Allow picnic, hiking trails. 9-16-02
		Hiking, crafts, target practice - Bow/arrow, bb guns. 9-19-02

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Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
		Use Cudy Lamb pool as public swimming pool or a facility somewhere (Plummer's pool?). 9-16-02
		Promote FWS Big Six. 9-19-02
		Uniform permitting process for events. 9-17-02
		Camping regulations, up the amount of time allowed to stay. 9-19-02
		Establish fee system for camping - day uses (fee). 9-19-02
		Complete area between mid-marsh and lower lake for various visitor services. 9-19-02
		Camping options/hunting especially lake areas - consider optional locations "zoning". 9-17-02
		Propose "smoothing" hunt boundaries to simplify. 9-17-02
		More attractions means more visitation, results in more revenue. 9-19-02
		Need more campsites. 9-19-02
	2	Some wildlife refuges allow ATV and other OHV use. Please consider this legitimate way to visit the refuge, especially the Desert National Range. Do not assume that ATV's disturb wildlife anymore than licensed vehicles, hikers, or horse riders.
	3	This also means allowing motorized access, both registered street legal and OHV access.
	4	I would like to see the Desert National Wildlife Range's existing roads and trails to be open to OHV's (Jeeps, ATV's) so that these legitimate users can enjoy these public lands.
	5	Some wildlife areas allow off-road vehicles, with no detriment to the wildlife. The use of ATV's is a legal and legitimate recreational sport, so I feel we should be allowed to visit and ride in these areas. We are respectful of all wildlife and stay on existing roads, without disturbing wildlife any more than hikers, horse riders or Jeeps.
	6	It is important to address ways to allow ATV's to access the Desert National Range. Viewing wildlife and nature in general is a wonderful experience. ATV's do not disturb the lands and wildlife if there are marked trails - same as for horses, bicycles and hikers.
	9	Campgrounds - longer stay times - 14 days too short.
	9	Open VP campgrounds on the other side of the lake and try to make campers police their own areas.

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Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
	10	I would like to know the impact of four wheel drive and ATV, on the environment of the refuges. Taking into account air pollution, noise, fire and damage to vegetation. Also the use of these vehicle to traverse in close areas.
		Hiking - A multi-agency trail .. to Muddy and Warm Springs with BLM, LDS, FWS. 9-16-02
		Wildlife observation - need additional vehicle access. 9-16-02
		American Disabilities Act - access to Sawmill canyon, picnicking. 9-17-02
		Roads - historic use in Sawmill Canyon. 9-17-02
	8	Crystal Reservoir - Road county owned want to pave - dust/safety tine in w/ bratty habitat trails project, Lathrop Wells, etc., (NV important bird area program?)
		Public access - define existing, designated, permitted, and closed roads/trails. 9-17-02
		Visitor Service closed circuit wildlife viewing opportunities (American Disabilities Act response). 9-17-02
		Consider All Terrain Vehicle use at Desert and Ash Meadows by permit or by event basis. 9-17-02
		Public Access - wilderness areas - "If roads.. should not be considered wilderness". 9-17-02
		Museum at Corn Creek - Visitor Center. 9-17-02
		Ecotourism? Activities with attendees from outside Moapa Valley could enhance local businesses. 9-16-02
	1	Research opportunities should be identified that the refuges can support without adversely impacting biological resources or wildlife-dependent recreation.
		Education for Boy scouts, school groups. 9-16-02
		Have a Cub Scout day camp. 9-18-02
		Activities for children - passive/active (pulling, planting). 9-16-02
		Develop programs offered specifically for Moapa Valley residents (i.e., Bat Night) through high school, cooperative extension, local newspapers, scouts. 9-16-02
		Refuge purpose and opportunities for use - most people don't know what can/not do. What are the refuge purposes? Educate through town boards, local conservation organizations., local newspapers fliers. 9-16-02

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Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
		DEST - Interpretive/Environmental Education program for Sawmill Canyon (historic logging for MOVA community) would acknowledge the connections between the refuges in the Complex. 9-16-02
		Partners in Conservation Library - 3 MOVA publications (or more). 9-16-02
		Education experience to include plants & animals. 9-16-02
		Need to emphasize Threatened and Endangered endemics in outreach Environmental Education. 9-19-02
		Need self guided Visitor Service materials. 9-19-02
		Use different networking strategies. Have family activity - planning meetings (kids too). E-mail tree for rural neighbor's communities. 9-16-02
		Public relations on projects could build better support. 9-16-02
		Develop programs/partnerships. 9-16-02, 9-19-02
		Develop partner in community activities and recreational development. 9-19-02
		Refuge history reported at local community history celebrations and/or Chautauquas. 9-19-02
		CSI access interpretive kiosk (Coyote Springs). 9-17-02
		Raise (up) advertising. 9-17-02
	1	Off and on-site educational/interpretative opportunities should be identified in cooperation with other federal agencies, state and local governments.
		MOVA - allow Mountain Man Rendezvous, 700+ people on weekend, with camping. 9-16-02
		Allow canoes on Crystal Reservoir. 9-19-02
		Develop horseback opportunities, facilities for riding (staging, trails, access -> tailoring). 9-16-02
		At Quail Springs - continuity of trails, facilities, "good neighbor" program. 9-16-02
		Contact: HIP number, Hunting Licences, Review Journal - Thursday, Sporting Clubs, Sporting Retailers, Lincoln County Newspaper, Neighborhood Survey (copy to Overton concerning MOVA). 9-16-02
		Raise (up) visitor attractions (videos ...). 9-17-02

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Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
		Local education (newspaper) on refuge resources/activities. 9-16-02
		Public relations on projects could build better support. 9-16-02
		Public Relations could include: radio stations, internet server (comnet.net for MOVA), classroom presentations, classroom notification of websites (i.e., DNWRC, USFWS,...). 9-16-02
		Hold anniversary celebrations for complex and refuges, i.e., AHME 1984 - 2004 - 20 year MOVA 1979 - 2004 - 25 year PAHR 1963 - 2003 - 40 yr, or 2008 - 45 year DEST 1936 -2001 - 65 yr, or 2011 - 75 year. 9-19-02
	9	Hire a person who is sensitive to R/V RJ(?) and can be an ombudsman between the two.
		Develop sense of local pride/constituency. Programs/process/information through partnerships. 9-16-02
	1	The Service should be sure that the state wildlife agency is a full partner is developing the CCPs. Refuge hunting and trapping regulations should mirror state regulations unless there is adequate evidence of negative impacts to wildlife resources or wildlife dependent recreational activities as a major component of the refuge programs as appropriate under founding authorities. The planning process should also be open and provide for meaningful feedback to the public as the process continues.
ECONOMIC		
		Need staff physically located at refuge for safety, education. Polling of visitors on site on weekend. 9-16-02
		What activities are each refuge engaged currently? 9-16-02
		Need more staff especially for Visitor Service, and on weekends. 9-19-02
		Possible shared staffing opportunity with mutual boundaries (inter & multi-agency). 9-16-02
		Need to allow funding for monitoring. 9-17-02
		Seek funding. 9-17-02
		Budgets for bighorn sheep water should be separate line item. 9-17-02
		Identify funding mechanisms. 9-17-02
		Staffing refuges - plan should encourage long-term tenure to ensure continuity. 9-19-02

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Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
		Need more people to maintain refuge. 9-19-02
	10	I would like to see a better job done at Pahrnagat NWR. . The managers at this complex have come and gone. Each one doing as little as he can before moving on. I would like to see more accountability for the manager before they move on or get promoted to a new complex.
		More attractions means more visitation, results in more revenue. 9-19-02
		Ecotourism? Activities with attendees from outside Moapa Valley could enhance local businesses. 9-16-02
	1	In as much as possible the CCP and accompanying NEPA documents should be developed independent of the budget process in that it is most important in the Plan to first identify the priority items that must be accomplished and then assign the budget costs in a priority manner to get the work done.
LAND USE		
		Prescribed burns, especially in Middle Marsh. 9-19-02
		All fed agencies coordinate with the CCPs, RMP, NAFB/RP, USFS. 9-17-02
	1	Active management to benefit wildlife should be addressed, including fire, stream restoration, weed control, and road closures.
	1	The Plan should address how existing plans for adjacent managed lands (state, federal, private) will be considered in providing a consistent approach to common objectives.
	1	Priority should be given to monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management with respect to activities identified in the Plan.
	7	Addressing the fact that wildlife management and Wilderness can go hand-in-hand and do not conflict with each other.
		Do not forward wilderness proposal - management freedom (response time). 9-17-02
		Water quality at PAHR, cattle ranching. 9-17-02
		Wilderness status could impair USFWS management (predator control, burns). 9-19-02
	2	Areas proposed as wilderness can be better protected if not under wilderness designation.
	3	I would like to see the wilderness areas from 1974 opened up to public access. Allowing this and future generations the opportunity to observe and enjoy these areas.

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Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
	4	(Also), I am totally opposed to any wilderness designations in the refuge. Wilderness designation would tie the hands of the wildlife manager, severely limit the usefulness of the area, and turn the area into a "land of no uses".
	7	Potential Wilderness designation within the DNWR Complex.
		Public Access - wilderness areas - "If roads.. should not be considered wilderness". 9-17-02
	7	Assurance that potential Wilderness areas are not managed in such a way that would jeopardize the potential Wilderness designation.
		Impacts of higher use includes increased dumping. 9-19-02
	1	Plan should specify what effect expanded public uses would have on existing wildlife populations and distribution.
		Need to address road openings/closures. 9-17-02
		Roads need regular maintenance; paving, turnouts. 9-19-02
		Pave road - maintain access. 9-17-02
	4	I would like to see the Desert National Wildlife Range's existing roads and trails to be open to OHV's (Jeeps, ATV's) so that these legitimate users can enjoy these public lands.
		Roads - historic use in Sawmill Canyon. 9-17-02
		Public access - define existing, designated, permitted, and closed roads/trails. 9-17-02
		Officialization of ... illegal trespasses over 5 years old. 9-17-02
		Future land acquisition - Church ranch (MOVA). How many more acres to be expanded in the future? 9-16-02
		Boundary issues - multi-agency cooperation versus competition. 9-16-02
		Refuge boundary delineation. Identify roads. 9-17-02
		Agricultural land use. 9-19-02
		Grazing as vegetation management strategy. 9-19-02
	1	The methods, intensity, and purpose of livestock grazing that will be permitted on the refuges must be presented in the Plan.
	1	The Plan should provide for quality consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife-dependent use on all the refuges.
SOCIAL VALUES		
		Fire hydrants are not adjacent to the refuge. If fire occurs water pumping from the river occurs due to lack of hydrants. 9-16-02

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Resource Area/Issue	Commentor *	Comment
		Mosquito/vector control. Disease. 9-19-02
AESTHETICS		
	10	I would like to know the impact of four wheel drive and ATV, on the environment of the refuges. Taking into account air pollution, noise, fire and damage to vegetation. Also the use of these vehicle to traverse in close areas.

Commentor Number	Name, City/State, Affiliation	Date Attended/Comment Received
1	Len H. Carpenter Field Representative, Wildlife Management Institute	August 30, 2002, letter
2	Sallie Clinard Las Vegas, NV	September 17, 2002, comment card
3	Mike Albrecht Las Vegas, NV	September 17, 2002, comment card
4	Gary Clinard Las Vegas, NV	September 17, 2002, comment card
5	Cathey Adamsen Las Vegas, NV	September 17, 2002, comment card
6	Robert Jay Las Vegas, NV	September 17, 2002, comment card
7	Jeremy Garnarz Las Vegas, NV Friends of Nevada Wilderness	September 16, 2002, e-mail
8	Dr. James Marble	September 17, 2002, comment card
9	Allan Pritcher Overton, NV	September 23, 2002, comment card
10	Glen Franke Henderson, NV	September 23, 2002, comment card

APPENDIX C

INTERAGENCY SCOPING SIGN-IN SHEETS

NAME	AFFILIATION OR TITLE	ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX	E-MAIL
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NAME	AFFILIATION OR TITLE	ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX	E-MAIL
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Desert National Wildlife
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NAME	AFFILIATION OR TITLE	ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX	E-MAIL
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APPENDIX D

INTERAGENCY COMMENTS SUMMARY TABLE

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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Interagency Scoping Meeting Comments - August 28, 2002

Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
CLIMATE		
AIR QUALITY		
	G	What are the impacts of mining on air quality?
	G	What is the general air quality, is it affected by regional haze?
	G	How is the dark night sky affected at DEST?
	G	How does controlled burns affect air quality? Concerns are from public viewpoint.
	G	How does public access affect air quality?
	G	Part of DEST is in a non-attainment area. How will activities on the range be affected by this?
	G	There is a need to coordinate with the air quality group.
	G	What are the impacts of air quality on native species and natural systems, exotic species/ deposition of nitrogen, etc?
	G	How do nearby industries affect air quality within the refuge?
	G	Does access to the refuge on dirt roads cause PM ¹⁰ exceedance?
	G	How are the roads within the refuge maintained to control dust and carbon monoxide?
	7	How will FWS coordinate with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) concerning air quality issues?
	10	The EIS should provide a detailed discussion of air quality standards, ambient conditions, and potential air quality impacts for Clark, Lincoln, and Nye Counties. Include a description of current and proposed activities and their impacts on air quality. Cumulative and indirect impacts should be fully evaluated.
	10	If major construction or earth moving is proposed, EPA believes that it is important and appropriate that the EIS address the new eight-hour ozone standard and the new "fine" particulate matter standard (PM _{2.5}).
	10	EPA recognizes the serious health effects that "fine" particulates can cause, and, therefore, urges project proponents to reduce particulate emissions to the greatest extent possible.
TOPOGRAPHY		
GEOLOGY		
Mineral Potential	7, G	What is the status of mining activities at AHME?
	7, G	Are there any subsurface mine rights?

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Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	G	How will mineral potential/extraction be affected by the proposed Clark County Lands Bill?
Hazardous Materials	G	Are there hazardous materials deposited as a result of mining activities?
HYDROLOGY		
Surface Water	G	What is the impact of water use on natural systems?
	G	Have mining activities affected surface water bodies?
	G	Need for study on water quality and level monitoring.
	G	Has public use affected surface water quality?
	G	Have mining activities affected water quality?
	10	The EIS should fully disclose proposed management and conservation of water resources and the potential beneficial and/or adverse impacts to water quality, water quantity, springs, wetlands, riparian habitat, meadows, and aquatic ecosystems.
	10	Include information on the potential of the proposed management alternatives to cause adverse aquatic impacts such as increased siltation and turbidity; changes in the direction and level of stream flow, salinity, substrate, dissolved oxygen, and temperature; and habitat deterioration.
	10	The EIS should evaluate the implications of the management alternatives on compliance with the Federal Antidegradation Policy.
	10	Discuss specific monitoring programs that will be implemented before and after proposed management actions to determine potential impacts on water quality and beneficial uses, and whether maintenance and protection of water quality can be guaranteed.
	10	The EIS should identify impacts to water, flood plains, and wetlands, including identification of Section 404 Clean Water Act requirements, and management and mitigation proposals to ensure compliance with these requirements.
	10	The proposed actions must meet all of the following criteria: There is no practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem; The proposed action does not violate State water quality standards, toxic effluent standards, or jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed species or their critical habitat; The proposed action will not cause or contribute to significant degradation of waters of the United States, including wetlands; All appropriate and practicable steps are taken to minimize adverse impacts on the aquatic ecosystem (i.e., mitigation).

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Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
Groundwater	5, G	How does groundwater withdrawals affect natural resources (AHME).
	G	Impact from development, existing and future pumping (AHME, MOVA).
	10	The EIS should describe and fully evaluate the water sources and risks to these sources for all lands within the Refuge complex. The evaluation should consider groundwater overdraft, potential future water development projects (e.g., new water well fields), the potential reduction of groundwater recharge, and the potential for groundwater and surface water contamination....The CCP should include detailed goals, objectives and strategies for managing and protecting critical water resources.
Water Rights (surface and groundwater)	G	Who has water rights (surface and groundwater). How much is allocated. Delineation of future use.
	G	Are there any partnerships/coordination among agencies?
	G	What is the water use in relation to existing laws & policy.
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES		
Vegetation - Threatened/Endangered	G	Need for identification of federal and state listed species.
Vegetation	7	How will FWS coordinate with other agencies concerning habitat management/landscape restoration?
	6	A general inventory survey (DEST).
	G	There is a need for an assessment of what needs to be restored.
	G	Need to develop a restoration plan.
	G	Need to develop restoration objectives for each refuge.
	G	Need to develop public involvement in restoration objectives as partnerships.
	G	Restoration Plan needs to address the (big picture), leading to specific processes.
	7, G	How will prescribed fire and other mechanical methods be used for habitat management?
	7, G	How will FWS coordinate with National Park Service (NPS) and other agencies concerning habitat management/landscape restoration?
	G	How will restoration activities interact with existing Habitat Conservation Plans?
	G	There is a need for monitoring following completion of restoration for both habitat and species.

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Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	G	Need for removal of fire regime.
	G	What is the plan for habitat restoration/management?
	G	There is a need to determine baseline conditions (contact National Resources Conservation Service).
	G	Is there a plan for prescribed fire?
	G	How are wildfires handled?
	G	Is there a fuels management program (concerning fire management)?
	G	What are the impacts of air quality on native species and natural systems, exotic species/ deposition of nitrogen, etc?
Vegetation - Noxious Weeds	G	How will the refuge handle noxious weeds? What is the plan?
	G	How does the refuge handle invasive species? What is the plan?
	G	Is there, or will there be, a community outreach program educating the public about invasive species?
	G	What are the impacts of air quality on native species and natural systems, exotic species/ deposition of nitrogen, etc?
	9	Management actions necessary to control invasive and/or noxious weeds need to be addressed.
	10	The CCP and EIS should fully address invasive species management.
Wildlife - Non-Game Species	3	Concern for waterfowl and shorebirds (PAHR).
	3	Hidden forest chipmunk, bats (general and specific), Kit Fox, Nuttall's cottontail, Golden Mantled ground squirrel DEST).
	6	A general inventory survey (DEST).
	G	Is wildlife using abandoned mines/caves as habitat?
	G	How will FWS manage release of non-native species?
	G	What is the interaction of development on native species?
	G	Is there an illegal collection problem of herps (reptiles)?
	G	How does refuge operations affect Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)?
	G	What is the interaction with MSHCP, Coyote Springs and DEST?
	7, G, 9	What is the wild horse and burro management plan? If there are burros (and/or wild horses) in any of the refuges, the proposed management, or elimination, of such critters needs to be addressed in the plan.

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Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	8	NDOW has an interest in non-game species in relation to the Nevada Species List .
	10	The EIS should fully evaluate proposed management alternatives in the context of the potential for habitat restoration, habitat fragmentation, loss of connectivity, and the cumulative effect on species viability....The EIS should also evaluate potential impacts on other significant or keystone species (e.g., native species). EPA supports the ecosystem and species viability versus a species-specific approach. The feasibility of proposed management and mitigation measures should be fully demonstrated.
Wildlife - Game Species	2, 3	Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) has interest in Crystal reservoir (game fish introduction, etc.) (AHME).
	3, G	Predator control/management (DEST).
	3	Desert bighorn sheep - General use of habitat on refuge and hunting opportunities (AHME).
	3	Desert bighorn sheep - Maynard Lake Movement Corridor (PAHR).
	3	Desert bighorn sheep (DEST).
	3	Waterfowl/Shorebirds - water management and recreational fishing.
	G	How is enforcement of laws handled?
	8	NDOW has an interest in game species in relation to the Nevada Species List .
Wildlife - Threatened/Endangered/Species of Concern	3, 8	Concern for: Birds: Southwestern willow flycatcher (AHME, MOVA), Phainopepla (AHME, DEST, MOVA), Burrowing owl (AHME, DEST) Flammulated owl (DEST), Yellow-billed cuckoo (MOVA), Vermillion flycatcher (MOVA), Bald eagle (PAHR).
	3, 8	Mammals: Ash Meadows Montane vole (AHME), Pahrnagat Valley vole (PAHR).
	3, 8	Bats-general (AHME, MOVA), Bats Specific: California Leaf-nosed (MOVA), Townsend's big eared (AHME, DEST, MOVA, PAHR), Spotted (AHME, DEST, MOVA, PAHR), Western red (AHME, DEST, MOVA, PAHR), Hoary (AHME, DEST, MOVA, PAHR), Allen's Lappet-browed (DEST, MOVA, PAHR), Silver-haired (DEST, MOVA), Western mastiff (DEST, MOVA), Big free-tailed (DEST, MOVA, PAHR), Western yellow (MOVA).
	G	Are bats using abandoned mines/caves as habitat?
	7	How will FWS coordinate with other agencies concerning habitat management/landscape restoration?

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

Interagency Scoping Meeting Comments - August 28, 2002

Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	3, 8	Reptiles: Desert tortoise (AHME, DEST, PAHR), Chuckwalla (AHME, DEST, PAHR), Banded gila monster (AHME, DEST, MOVA, PAHR), Southern Desert Horned lizard (AHME, DEST, PAHR), Southern Desert Night lizard (AHME, DEST). Gilbert's Sink (DEST?), Mountain Kingsnake (DEST?), Regal Ring-necked snake (DEST), Desert iguana (MOVA).
Aquatics - Aquatic Habitats	G	Elimination of the reservoir that supports non-native species (AHME).
	10	Include information on critical fisheries habitat especially spawning and rearing areas; and other sensitive aquatic sites such as wetlands, meadows, springs, and lakes. Outline past and potential beneficial uses of these areas, and disclose potential impacts from the proposed management alternatives.
	10	Indicate what measures will be taken to protect critical fish and wildlife habitat areas from potential adverse effects of proposed management actions. The feasibility of proposed mitigation measures should be fully demonstrated.
Aquatics - Aquatic Species	2	Game fish (BLM) (PAHR).
	3	Corn Creek pond complex management - endemic fish (bullfrogs/crayfish).
	G	How will FWS manage release of non-native species?
	G	There is a need for community outreach program concerning non-native species education.
	G	What is the interaction of development on native species?
Aquatics - Threatened/Endangered	1, 3	NDOW has annual count for Moapa Dace. Quarterly count for Virgin River chub, Moapa speckled dace, Moapa springfish. (MOVA). DNWRC has rarely been directly involved in species surveys, species monitoring and maintaining habitats on the refuge. It has been the responsibility of NDOW, FWS-Ecological Services, U.S. Geological Services-Biological Research Division.
	1	Need beaver control, Tilapia eradication, refugia development. (MOVA).
	2, 3, 8	NDOW concern - Devil's Hole pupfish, Ash Meadows speckled dace, Amargosa pupfish, Warm Springs pupfish, Ash Meadows nancorid, present and future refugia sites (AHME).
	5, 9	NPS desires to formalize existing verbal agreement with FWS relative to refugia management of Devil's Hole pupfish (AHME). The transfer of Devil's Hole from the National Park Service jurisdiction to that of the Fish and Wildlife Service should be evaluated.

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

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Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	5, G	Preservation of Devil's Hole pupfish, prevent decline in population, and preserve natural ecosystem.
	2	Present and future refugia - Corn Creek for poolfish (DEST).
	2, 3	Speckled dace, Northern Leopard frog, Round-tailed chub, present and future refugia (PAHR).
	7	How will FWS coordinate with other agencies concerning habitat management/landscape restoration?
SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS		
	G	Are there any previous cultural activities associated with abandoned mines or caves?
	G	How are cultural resources protected?
	G	What is the interpretation of cultural resources? Is there an interpretive program?
	G	What is the ethnography of the refuges (who used what part of the refuges)?
	G	There is a need for an inventory and monitoring program.
	G	Are the plans for restoration of sites?
	G	Is there a looting problem?
	G	There is a general lack of law enforcement for cultural resources.
	7, G	Need for a Native American Consultation.
	10	We urge the Service to aggressively pursue public input, especially from Indian Tribes who may have cultural or religious interest in the lands of the Refuge Complex.
	G	How are paleo resources to be handled?
	G	There is a need for community outreach program concerning non-native species education.
	G	There is a need to develop a public outreach program concerning environmental education and Coyote Springs.
	G	There is a need for community outreach program concerning non-native (aquatic) species education.
	G	Need to form partnerships for recreation with communities and government agencies.
	G	What is the campfire rule? Are rules coordinated with other agencies for consistency?

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

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Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	G	What is the level of the public's use of water (surface water recreation)?
	G	What is the association between public use of water and management's desired use?
	G	What are the appropriate uses? Inappropriate uses (for each refuge)?
	G	Is there a possible trail link with Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Clark County?
	3	Recreational birdwatching (AHME, DEST, MOVA, PAHR).
	9	An alternative which creates significantly increased public accessibility and visitation should be considered. Increased accessibility would include road paving and visitor facilities to promote greater use of the Desert National Life (sic) Refuge and Ash Meadows. Increased interpretive features at all refuges to educate visitors and enhance their experience should also be included.
	G	What are the recreational uses along refuge boundaries?
	G	Need to develop a proactive outreach program.
	G	There is a need to educate the public in various languages.
	G	What are the types and levels of public interpretation, i.e., visitor counters, signage, facilities?
	G	What are the facilities for visitor needs (restrooms, water, parking)?
	G	How are rules enforced, how could they be better enforced?
	7, G	What is the level of coordination with other agencies concerning public use? How could it be made more effective?
	G	Are there transportation issues?
	G	There is a need to coordinate transportation with other agencies (i.e., Outside Las Vegas Foundation).
	9	An alternative which creates significantly increased public accessibility and visitation should be considered. Increased accessibility would include road paving and visitor facilities to promote greater use of the Desert National Life (sic) Refuge and Ash Meadows. Increased interpretive features at all refuges to educate visitors and enhance their experience should also be included.
	G	What is the access to remote areas in wildfire considerations?
	G	Need to develop plan to address illegal public use.
	G	What is the access to inholding properties?

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

Interagency Scoping Meeting Comments - August 28, 2002

Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	G	Is there a plan for acquisition of inholdings?
	G	Need to control access to Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use (mainly DEST).
	10	The CCP and EIS should fully address.... management of public use of the Refuge Complex.
ECONOMIC		
	G	CCP needs to outline staffing, funding and <u>implementation</u> .
	G	What happens if there is a shortfall of funding, staffing, etc?
LAND USE	7, G	How will FWS coordinate with National Park Service (NPS) and other agencies concerning habitat management/landscape restoration?
	9	If the planning process will be considering lands not presently included in the refuge for possible refuge additions or expansions, a concurrent evaluation needs to be made to determine if all land now under USFWS management is needed for refuge purposes. While not advocating reductions in refuge areas, there may be land currently under USFWS jurisdiction that is not needed for refuge purposes, that create management problems, or may be better managed by other agencies.
	10	The CCP and EIS should also include a description of specific actions and techniques which will be used to ensure continuous public participation and inter-agency/intra-agency collaboration and coordination in the CCP management and planning process.
	10	The EIS should include a clear description of the basic purpose and need for the action, management alternatives, potential impacts to the environment, and mitigation for these impacts....Full disclosure of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of all proposed actions is of specific concern. We recommend the prioritization of management activities to achieve the most environmental benefits from limited funding.
	10	A clear description of the purpose and need of the CCP and proposed management activities should be provided. The project objectives should be evaluated not in isolation, but in relation to one another.
	10	The alternative analysis of the EIS should portray the environmental consequence of <u>every</u> alternative...."in comparative form, thus sharply defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among options for the decision maker and the public."

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

Interagency Scoping Meeting Comments - August 28, 2002

Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	10	The EIS should fully document existing conditions; explain the changes which have occurred (e.g., historical management approaches, emergency management actions, and past impacts). We recommend the EIS provide a comprehensive assessment of what management actions have been done and what is currently being done.
	10	The EIS should adequately document cumulative impacts, including past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions....Information in the EIS should assist in establishing the possible problems in current conditions and defining management, conservation, restoration, and enhancement goals.
	10	The EIS should clearly state which baseline (e.g., existing conditions, conditions in future years) will be used to evaluate the potential impacts of the various management alternatives. Include a description of underlying growth and land use assumptions, assumed current and future management projects, and baseline environmental conditions. The baseline should be clearly defined, scientifically credible, logical, and have general support from all stakeholders.
	10	The EIS should evaluate a range of possible management alternatives. We urge a creative and flexible approach be taken in the development of these alternatives....there should be a clear discussion of the reasons for the elimination of alternatives which were not evaluated in detail. The EIS should describe how each alternative was developed, how it addresses refuge goals, long-range objectives and Refuge Complex purposes, and how the alternative will be implemented.
	10	We strongly recommend subsequent environmental analysis for project-level actions (e.g., specific management projects). We believe such follow-up environmental planning is critical given the scope of the CCP and the likely reliance on adaptive management strategies.
	G	How will restoration activities interact with existing Habitat Conservation Plans?
	10	EPA strongly supports a multi-species/multi-habitat approach, use of adaptive management, and an inclusive conservation plan development process.
	10	The EIS should include a summary of existing scientific evidence documenting the effectiveness of the conservation, restoration, and management proposals. We also advocate a strong commitment to monitoring, surveys, and adaptive management; especially given the possible limited amount of specific scientific information regarding the ecological mechanisms of the various Refuge Complex lands and specific species needs. The EIS should describe possible fallback options if fish and wildlife species and critical habitat experience a decline.

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

Interagency Scoping Meeting Comments - August 28, 2002

Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	10	The EIS should provide full disclosure of possible funding, implementation schedules, and monitoring commitments, assurances, and mechanisms for the CCP.
	10	Implementation, validation, and assessment monitoring may be critical in ensuring successful implementation of the CCP. The EIS should describe in detail all proposed monitoring and their effectiveness in assuring all management objectives are met.
	10	If references to previous documents are used, the EIS should provide a summary of critical issues, assumptions and decisions complete enough to stand alone without depending upon continued referencing of the other documents.
	10	The EIS should include a Section on potential effects on local, State and Federal ordinances, regulations, legislation, and laws.
	5	Devil's Hole is NPS land.
	5, 9	NPS desires to formalize existing verbal agreement with FWS relative to refugia management of Devil's Hole pupfish (AHME). The transfer of Devil's Hole from the National Park Service jurisdiction to that of the Fish and Wildlife Service should be evaluated.
	G	Is there a plan for prescribed fire?
	G	Are there any Memorandum or Understanding (MOU) with BLM or other agencies concerning fire management?
	G	How are wildfires handled?
	G	Is there a fuels management program (concerning fire management)
	7, G	How will prescribed fire and other mechanical methods be used for habitat management?
	4	To assist FWS in accomplishing its mission while seeking viable means for improving visitors experience to create an urban interface strategy for the southern boundary (DEST).
	G	What are the recreational uses along refuge boundaries?
	9	An alternative which creates significantly increased public accessibility and visitation should be considered. Increased accessibility would include road paving and visitor facilities to promote greater use of the Desert National Life (sic) Refuge and Ash Meadows. Increased interpretive features at all refuges to educate visitors and enhance their experience should also be included.
	7, G	Are there boundary changes and/or expansion realignments?
	G	Will the refuges be affected by the expansion of disposal area (Senate Bill 2612, House Bill 5200)?

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

Interagency Scoping Meeting Comments - August 28, 2002

Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	G	What would the impacts to adjacent lands be with the release of wilderness areas?
	G	How are the refuges affected by the 1974 Wilderness proposal?
	G	Is the "kitchen sink" bill in conflict with Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)? (SB 2612, HB 5200).
	9	The suitability of lands in both the Desert National Wildlife Refuge and Ash Meadows for wilderness designation by congress should be evaluated. Alternatives which range from no wilderness to the maximum area meeting the suitability standards should be included as part of the DEIS with appropriate analysis.
	9	In some versions of the Clark County Land Act an expansion of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge easterly towards U.S. highway 93 if proposed. If there is an expansion the proposed refuge plan should also be expanded to include these lands and address the management and use of those lands as part of the refuge.
	G	Where are the utilities, wells, pipelines and power lines located?
	10	The CCP and EIS should fully address...the potential threat and control of urban encroachment.
	10	The EIS should also fully describe the existing condition of the Desert National Wildlife Range and the dual management of the Range for desert bighorn sheep and use by the Secretary of the Air Force for military testing, training and other defense-related purposes. We recommend the CCP clearly delineate management strategies for the dual purposes and objectives of the Desert National Wildlife Range.
SOCIAL VALUES		
	G	What is the relationship with military use and cooperation?
	G	Are there safety issues associated with abandoned mines or caves?
	G	Are there other federal uses on the refuge?
	10	The EIS should describe the measures taken by FWS to: 1) fully analyze the environmental effects of the proposed Federal action on minority communities, e.g. Indian Tribes, and low-income populations, and 2) present opportunities for affected communities to provide input into the NEPA process.
AESTHETICS		
	G	Are there structural towers?
	G	Is there illegal dumping on the refuges? What is the visual/odor affect?
	G	How does existing public access affect visual quality?

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Interagency Scoping Meeting Comments - August 28, 2002

Resource Area/ Issue	Commentor*	Comment
	G	What are the visual resource management (VRM) classifications?

:

Commentor Number	Name	Organization
1	Jim Heinrich	NDOW*/Fisheries
2	Brian Hobbs	NDOW/Native Fish and Amphibians
3	Craig Stevenson	NDOW, Habitat Biologist
4	Elizabeth Smith-Incer	NPS**/Trails Conservation Assistant Conservation Leader
5	Linda Greene	NPS/Death Valley
6	Norm Matson	USDA***Forest Service
7	Jeffrey G. Steinmetz	BLM****/Environmental Protection Specialist
8	Chris Tomlinson	NDOW*/Wildlife Diversity Biologist
9	Mike Del Grosso	NDSL *****/Deputy Administrator
10	Laura Fujii	EPA***** Region IX/Federal Activities Office
G	General Comments - interagency group	

* NDOW Nevada Division of Wildlife
 ** NPS National Park Service
 *** USDA U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
 ****BLM Bureau of Land Management
 *****NDSL Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of State Lands
 *****EPA Environmental Protection Agency

APPENDIX E

NOTICE OF INTENT

Title of Proposal: Mortgage Insurance for Cooperative and Condominium Housing.

OMB Approval Number: 2502-0141.

Form Numbers: HUD-93201.

Description of the Need for the Information and Its Proposed Use: Project Information is analyzed to determine whether a cooperative or condominium project is eligible for mortgage insurance.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit, not-for-profit institutions.

Frequency of Submission: On occasion.

	Number of respondents	Annual responses	×	Hours per response	=	Burden hours
Reporting Burden	15	1		6		91

Total Estimated Burden Hours: 91.
Status: Reinstatement, without change.

Authority: Section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 35, as amended.

Dated: August 13, 2002.

Wayne Eddins,

*Departmental Reports Management Officer,
Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

[FR Doc. 02-21230 Filed 8-20-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4210-72-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent to Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to gather information necessary to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex is composed of Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Desert National Wildlife Range, Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge located in Clark, Lincoln and Nye Counties, Nevada. A Wilderness Review of Desert National Wildlife Range will also be completed concurrently in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, as amended, and Refuge Planning Policy

602 FW Chapters 1, 2, and 3. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with our National Wildlife Refuge Planning Policy and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and implementing regulations, to advise other agencies, Tribal Governments, and the public of our intentions, and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues and alternatives to include in the CCP and the environmental document.

DATES: A series of public scoping meetings will be held on September 16 through September 19 at the following locations:

Date	Time	Location
Sept. 16, 2002	7-9 pm	Moapa Community Center, Moapa Valley, NV.
Sept. 17, 2002	7-9 pm	Fish and Wildlife Service Office, Las Vegas, NV.
Sept. 18, 2002	4-6 pm	Amargosa Valley Multi-purpose Building, Amargosa Valley, NV.
Sept. 18, 2002	7-9 pm	Bob Ruud Community Center, Pahrump, NV.
Sept. 19, 2002	7-9 pm	Alamo Annex Building, Alamo, NV.

Interested persons are encouraged to attend these meetings to identify issues, concerns, and opportunities to be addressed in the CCP. For directions to the meetings, please contact us at the phone number listed below. To ensure that the Service has adequate time to evaluate and incorporate suggestions and other input into the planning process, comments should be received within 60 days from the date of this notice.

ADDRESSES: Address comments and requests to be put on the mailing list, receive more information, or receive a copy of the most recent planning update to: Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4701 North Torrey Pines, Las Vegas, NV 89130 or call the

Complex at (702) 515-5450. Submit faxes to (702) 515-5460. If you choose to submit comments via electronic mail, visit <http://desertcomplex.fws.gov> and use the "Guest Mailbox" provided at that site. More information on the CCP process is also available at the above internet site by selecting the "CCP Planning Update" link.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Birger, Project Leader, at the address and phone number above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Established in 1984 under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the Refuge comprises 23,000 acres of spring fed

wetlands, mesquite bosques, and desert uplands that provide habitat for at least 24 plants and animal species found nowhere else in the world. The primary purpose of the Refuge is to provide for the protection and recovery of endangered fish and plants, such as Devil's Hole, Ash Meadows Amargosa, and Warm Springs pupfish, Ash Meadows speckled dace, Ash Meadows milk-vetch, spring-loving centaury plant, Ash Meadows sunray, Ash Meadows ivesia, Ash Meadows gumplant, and Ash Meadows blazing star. The Amargosa Pupfish Station, located within the Refuge, is home to a vertebrate species that may have one of the most restricted habitats on the planet. The most striking feature of the

Refuge is the more than 30 spring-fed pools and streams that contrast sharply with the arid desert that surround them.

Desert National Wildlife Range

The Refuge, established in 1936 by Executive Order No. 7373 for the protection, preservation and management of desert bighorn sheep, as well as other forms of native flora and fauna occurring on the Refuge, encompasses 1.5 million acres of the diverse Mojave Desert in southern Nevada. It is the largest National Wildlife Refuge in the lower 48 states.

The Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999, Pub. L. No. 106-65, authorized the withdrawal of 2,919,890 acres of public lands in Clark, Nye, and Lincoln Counties, Nevada from all forms of appropriation under the public lands laws (including the mining laws and the mineral leasing and the geothermal leasing laws). These withdrawn lands were reserved for use by the Secretary of the Air Force for military testing, training and other defense-related purposes. During the period of withdrawal, the Act provides that the lands within the Desert National Wildlife Range will be managed by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd, *et seq.*) and other laws applicable to the National Wildlife Refuge System. Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary of the Air Force, The Secretary of the Interior is to manage withdrawn lands for the purposes for which the Refuge was established and to support current and future military aviation training.

Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge

The Refuge was established September 10, 1979, under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1969, as amended, to secure habitat for the endangered Moapa dace. The Refuge is located on 106 acres in northeastern Clark County. Due to its small size, fragile habitats, on-going habitat restoration work, and unsafe structures, the Refuge is currently closed to the general public.

Pahranagat National Wildlife Refuge

The Refuge was established in 1963, under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, as amended, to provide protection and habitat for migrating birds in the Pahranagat Valley. The 5,382 acre refuge consists of marshes, meadows, lakes, and upland desert habitat. It provides nesting, resting, and feeding areas for ducks, geese, swans, and other birds.

Background and Planning Process

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, requires the Service to manage all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System in accordance with an approved CCP (16 U.S.C. 668dd(e)). The CCP will guide wildlife, habitat, and public use management decisions and identify refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving Refuge purposes. Public input into this planning process is encouraged. The CCP will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuges and how the Service will implement management strategies over the next 15 years. Until the CCP is completed, Refuge management will continue to be guided by refuge purposes, federal legislation regarding management of national wildlife refuges, and other legal, regulatory and policy guidance.

Comments and concerns received will be used to develop goals, key issues and management strategies, and draft alternatives. Additional opportunities for public participation will occur throughout the CCP process, which is expected to be completed by 2005. Input from interested federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, organizations and individuals is encouraged.

During development of the CCP, we will comply with the provisions of NEPA through concurrent preparation of an EIS that will accompany the CCP. The draft EIS will contain a No Action Alternative, a proposed action alternative, and potentially other alternatives. The alternatives will be used to define management options and compare their effects. The potential environmental impacts of each alternative will be analyzed in the draft EIS. A range of alternatives (and their effects on the biological resources and on the local communities) that address the issues and the management strategies associated with the issues will be evaluated in the EIS.

We are required by Service policy to complete a wilderness review of Service managed lands to determine if any lands are suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The wilderness review will be integrated into the CCP/EIS process including identification of areas that meet the minimum wilderness criteria; evaluation of the wilderness suitability of alternatives; and documentation of recommendations. Wilderness designation requires Congressional legislation. The last step, if appropriate,

would consist of forwarding any suitable recommendations from the Director of the Service, through the Secretary of the Interior and the President, to Congress in a Wilderness Study Report.

Conclusion

With the publication of this notice, the public is encouraged to help identify potential issues, management actions and concerns; significant problems or impacts; and opportunities to resolve them. The public scoping period will continue for 60 days from the date of this notice. However, the Service will accept comments throughout the planning process.

All comments received from individuals on environmental impact statements become part of the official public record. Requests for such comments will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations [40CFR1506.6(f)] and other Service and Departmental policy and procedures.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NEPA Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, Executive Order 12996, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: August 7, 2002.

Ken McDermond,

Acting Manager, California/Nevada Operations Office, Sacramento, California.
[FR Doc. 02-20699 Filed 8-20-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Meeting of the Klamath Fisheries Management Council

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. I), this notice announces a meeting of the Klamath Fishery Management Council, established under the authority of the Klamath River Basin Fishery Resources Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 460ss *et seq.*). The Klamath Fishery Management Council makes recommendations to agencies that regulate harvest of anadromous fish in

APPENDIX F

GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Appendix A
General Environmental Checklist

This checklist is intended to facilitate effect analysis for the various alternatives under consideration. The list of Physical, biological and social considerations can be answered with a “yes” or “no” response. For any item answered “yes,” discuss under the appropriate alternative in Section IV.

Would implementation of the alternative be expected to affect any of the physical, biological or social considerations listed below?

Physical Considerations

- A. Climate
- B. Air Quality
- A. Topography
 - 1. Relief
 - 2. Cuts/Fills
- B. Geology
 - 1. Earthquake/Landslide
 - 2. Minerals
 - 3. Energy Resource Depletion/Conservation
 - 4. Radioactive and Toxic Substances/Heavy Metals
 - 5. Erosion/Deposition
 - 6. Siltation
 - 7. Soil Quality
- C. Hydrology
 - 1. Surface and Ground Water Quality/Quantity
 - 2. Absorption/Drainage
 - 3. Flooding
 - 4. Hydro/Geothermal Energy Source

Biological Considerations

- D. Vegetation
 - 1. Species of Special Concern
 - 2. Critical Wildlife Habitat
 - 3. Species Diversity/Abundance
 - 4. Noxious Weeds/Exotic Plants/Pathogens
- E. Wildlife
 - 1. Species of Special Concern
 - 2. Species Diversity/Abundance
 - 3. Game/Non-Game Species
 - 4. Pests/Pathogens/Vectors/Predators/Feral or Exotic Animals

Social Considerations

- A. Cultural
 - 1. Archaeological/Historic Sites
 - 2. Educational/Recreational Opportunities
 - 3. Public Access
- B. Economic
 - 1. Cost
 - 2. Employment
 - 3. Commercial/Industrial Buildings
 - 4. Taxes/Property Values
- C. Land Use
 - 1. Plans/Policies/Controls
 - 2. Development/Growth
 - 3. Farmland/Open Space, Natural Areas
 - 4. Transportation Facilities/Public Utilities
- D. Social
 - 1. Quality of Life
 - 2. Community Cohesion
 - 3. Residents/Residences
 - 4. Population Change
 - 5. Human Health/Safety
 - 6. Public Services
 - 7. National Defense
- E. Aesthetics
 - 1. Scenery
 - 2. Noise
 - 3. Odor

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APPENDIX G

PLANNING UPDATE NO. 1



Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Fall 2002 – Update No. 1

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Begins in Fall



Prickly pear cactus.



Desert tortoise.

Greetings from the Refuge Manager

The Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Complex) is about to embark on an important multi-year process to develop Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) for the four refuges in southern Nevada. These plans will help guide overall refuge management for the next 15 years. Your ideas and comments will be an important part of the process, so I'd like to invite you to participate.

Before we begin the process, I'd like to provide background about the refuges' history, operation, and goals. You'll also find some information about the National Wildlife Refuge System and how comprehensive conservation planning fits into the overall picture of refuge management.

Planning will officially begin during the fall of 2002. This first "Planning Update" describes the beginning of the planning

process and information about attending our public scoping meetings.

We will frequently refer to aspects of the background materials provided in this *Planning Update No. 1* throughout the CCP process. Please try to read it before our first meeting; this will help all of us start on the same page, so to speak, when we begin our public scoping meetings.

I hope you'll feel free to contact me or Linda Miller if you have any questions. See page 8 to learn about the CCPs and page 10 for our phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Richard M. Birger
Project Leader, Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

What is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The Service manages the nearly 94 million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System and 8,000 waterfowl production areas encompassing 1.9 million acres in the prairie pothole region of the United States.

It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices, and 78 ecological services field stations.

The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their wildlife and habitat conservation efforts.

It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies. Some of these Service programs directly benefit both species and the citizens of Nevada.



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What is the National Wildlife Refuge System?



In 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt protected an island with nesting pelicans, herons, ibis, and roseate spoonbills in Florida's Indian River from feather collectors decimating their colonies. He established Pelican Island as the nation's first bird sanctuary and went on to establish many other sanctuaries for wildlife during his tenure. This small network of sanctuaries continued to expand, later becoming the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Today, nearly 100 years later, the four refuges that comprise the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex are spectacular examples of the diversity of the more than 535 National Wildlife Refuges encompassing nearly 94 million acres.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest system of lands in the world dedicated to the conservation of wildlife. It is spread across 50 states, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Johnson Atoll, Midway Atoll, and several other Pacific Islands. About 20.6 million acres in the Refuge System are managed as wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

In 1997 Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, the most recent legislation to provide significant new guidance for the management of the Refuge System. The act included a new statutory mission statement and directed the Service to manage the Refuge System as a national system of lands and waters devoted to conserving wildlife and maintaining biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of ecosystems.

This law required the Service to initiate comprehensive conservation planning for each refuge. It also stated that certain wildlife-dependent recreational uses are appropriate activities on refuges and strengthened the compatibility determination process for assuring that no refuge uses conflict with refuge purposes or the Refuge System mission.

What's in a Name?

Many people confuse state and federal fish and wildlife agencies because their names are similar. The Service is a federal agency within the Department of Interior. The Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) is an agency within the Nevada Department of Conservation and Resources.

Our names are similar and so are our missions: Both agencies are dedicated to wildlife conservation for the benefit of present and future generations. Our jurisdictions are different. The Service is the lead agency responsible for federally-listed species and migratory birds, whether they are located on federal, state, or private lands. The NDOW has primary responsibility for resident fish and wildlife on state and private lands, and oversees state-listed species issues throughout Nevada.

"Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of people who are alive today, but the property of unknown generations whose belongings we have no right to squander."

President Theodore Roosevelt

What is the mission of the Refuge System?

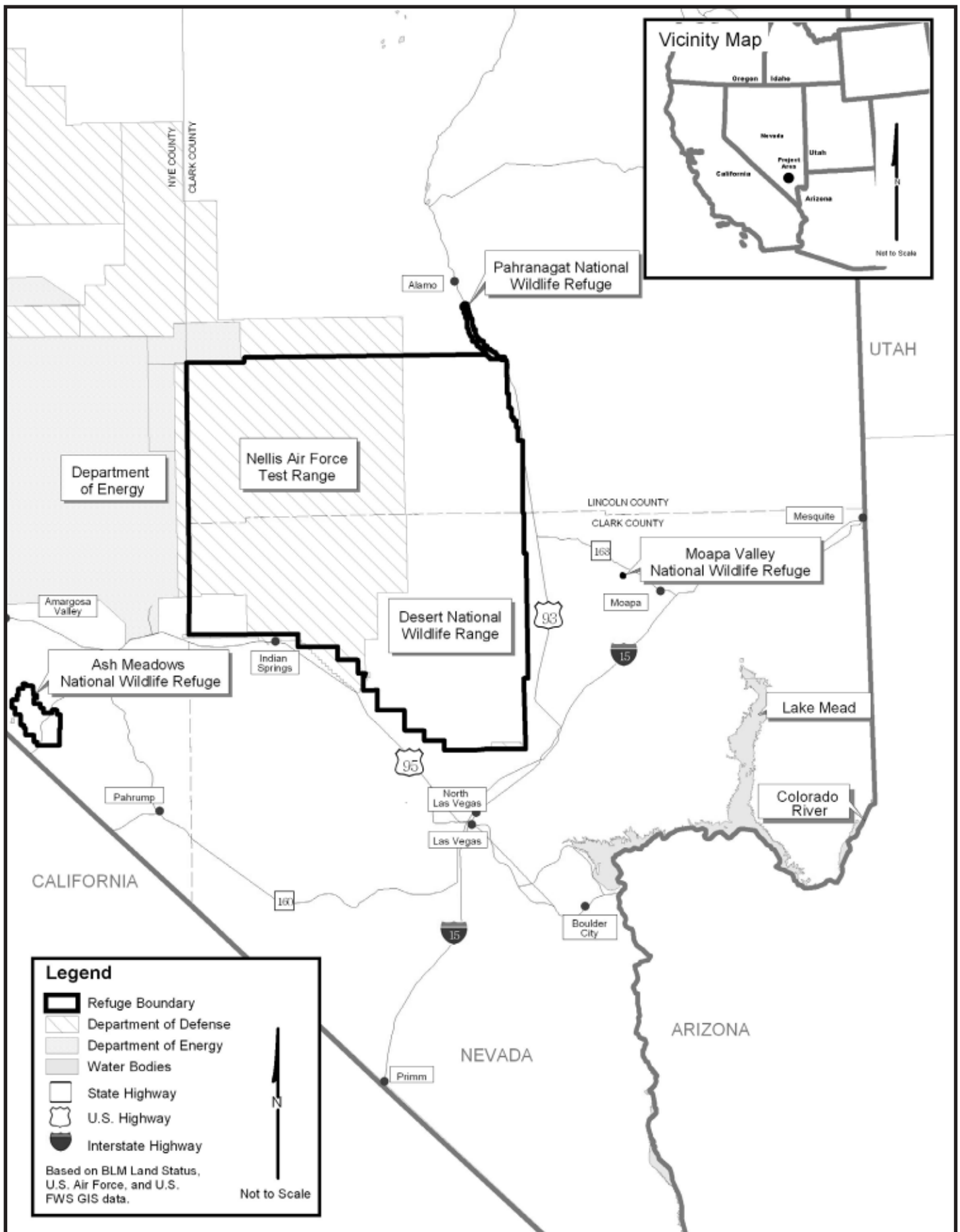


Cub Scouts help staff to maintain the refuge visitor use areas.

Refuges are places where wildlife comes first.

"The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

Our mission differs from other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, which focuses on forest stewardship and sustainable forest uses; the Bureau of Land Management, whose efforts are directed toward the productivity and multiple use of the land; and the National Park Service, which conserves scenery, wildlife, and historic objects for people's enjoyment.



The Refuge Complex

■ REFUGE LOCATIONS

The Complex consists of four refuges in southern Nevada: Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Desert National Wildlife Range, Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Pahrnatagat National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The four refuges comprise a total 1,527,603 acres within Clark, Lincoln and Nye counties, Nevada.

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature he finds it attached to the rest of the world ...”

John Muir

Ash Meadows NWR was established on June 18, 1984, to protect Federally-listed endangered plant and animal species. It consists of 23,488 acres located in Nye County, just north of the town of Pahrump, Nevada. Ash Meadows lies within a half hour drive southeast of Death Valley National Park, California.

Desert National Wildlife Range was established on May 20, 1936, for the preservation and management of desert bighorn sheep and their habitat. It is comprised of 1.5 million acres located in Clark and Lincoln counties, Nevada. It shares its southern border with the cities of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas and its magnificent mountain ranges can be seen throughout the Las Vegas Valley as well as in the Pahrnatagat Valley in Lincoln County.

Moapa Valley NWR was established on September 10, 1979, to secure and protect habitat for the endangered Moapa dace (a fish). It is comprised of 106 acres and is

about 60 miles from Las Vegas in northeastern Clark County, Nevada. The Refuge is part of a unique system of thermal springs that is part of the headwaters of the Muddy River which eventually flows into Lake Mead to the southeast.

Pahrnatagat NWR was established on August 16, 1963, to provide habitat for migratory birds, especially waterfowl. It is comprised of 5,380 acres of marshes meadows, lakes and upland desert habitat and is in Lincoln County, Nevada. The Refuge is an important stopping point for waterfowl and other migratory birds as well as visitors traveling on US Highway 93 to or from Las Vegas.

■ THE REFUGE COMPLEX

These refuges represent some of the best and the last of the Mojave Desert riparian and montane ecosystems with species of plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. The legacy of managing for wildlife first within these unique landscapes will allow for future generations to enjoy and be awed by these jewels of the desert. Thus, the Service's challenge is to conserve plants and animals living within the refuges and to seek compatible opportunity for visitors and local communities not only to enjoy and appreciate them, but to participate in their stewardship.

Although Moapa NWR and portions of the Desert Range are currently closed to public use, a variety of public uses occur on the Ash Meadows, Desert and Pahrnatagat NWRs. These include, but are not limited to the six priority public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended (1997), namely hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

■ ASH MEADOWS

Established with the purchase of 12,654 acres of former agricultural lands from The Nature Conservancy, Ash Meadows provides habitat for at least 24 plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. These include rare fish such as the Ash Meadows speckled dace, and plant species like the Ash Meadows ivesia, the Spring-loving centaury and the Ash Meadows sunray. The Ash Meadows NWR has a



Rugged mountain ranges and panoramic views define the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

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The Refuge Complex

Continued from page 4

greater concentration of endemic life than any other local area in the United States and the second greatest in all of North America. Boasting five fish, eight plants, at least 12 aquatic snails, one mammal, and two aquatic insects that occur nowhere else in the world, Ash Meadows provides a valuable and important example of desert oases that are now extremely uncommon in the southwestern United States.

In addition to Service-managed land, the refuge boundaries also encompass 9,460 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-owned land, approximately 800 acres of privately held land, and 40 acres managed by the National Park Service (NPS). The eastern boundary of the Refuge abuts BLM lands that are designated as the Ash Meadows Area of Critical Environmental Concern and are set aside for protection of the threatened Desert tortoise.

Additionally, the Refuge supports two refugia populations of Devils Hole pupfish which are on NPS lands. These refugia or “places of protection” were established in the event of a catastrophe occurring at Devils Hole that might cause the extinction of the species.

Landscape changes that occurred prior to the establishment of the Refuge present challenging and innovative management opportunities for habitat restoration and recovery of threatened and endangered species. The Refuge is currently undergoing a reconstruction of sorts. Many of the seeps, springs, pools and streams that support both the rare fish and plant species have been destroyed or altered by human activities over the last one hundred years. Habitat alterations during agricultural, and municipal and mining development caused the extinction of one fish, at least one snail, and possibly an endemic mammal. The Refuge staff is working hard to recreate a healthy ecosystem for the protected species by reconstructing pools and streams and replanting native plant species where they once flourished.

In 1986, Ash Meadows was among the first sites in the United States to be designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. Under this international treaty, 118 contracting parties agreed

to work together to develop national policies for wetland conservation, to cooperate in managing shared wetlands and their migratory species, and to devote special attention to the conservation of designated sites.

Public use at the Refuge currently includes wildlife observation, photography, horseback riding and picnicking. No camping or overnight parking is permitted. Swimming is permitted only in Crystal Reservoir. Boats without motors are allowed only on Crystal and Peterson Reservoirs. Jet skis are not permitted.

■ DESERT RANGE

Home to some of Nevada's largest mammals including desert bighorn sheep, bobcat, coyote, mountain lion (puma) and mule deer, the refuge encompasses over 2,300 square miles of rugged mountain ranges and panoramic valleys. As the largest National Wildlife Refuge in the lower 48 states, the Desert Range contains six major mountain ranges rising to an elevation of almost 10,000 feet. The wide range of elevation and rainfall (4 to 15 inches annually) has created a diverse habitat suited to a wide variety of flora and fauna.



Established for the conservation of the desert bighorn sheep in their natural environment, the Desert Range forms one of the largest intact blocks of desert bighorn sheep habitat remaining in the southwest. Bighorn sheep spend their lives foraging, breeding and raising their young among the barren cliffs of the mountain ranges. Water, which is the most limiting factor for bighorn populations, is in short supply on much of the Range. For this reason 30 springs have been improved and 26 “guzzlers” or water troughs, have been developed and are maintained by Service staff with the assistance of NDOW and public use organizations such as the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn.

“We need the tonic of wildness – to wade sometimes in the marshes where the bittern and meadow hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest.”

Henry David Thoreau



Ear tagging the sheep in order to track their movement and use of the habitat.

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The Refuge Complex

Continued from page 5

Volunteers help restore the landscape.



Birds are also a big attraction at the Desert Range, and Corn Creek Field Station, located along the southwestern edge of the Refuge, is known to be the best spot year round in southern Nevada to view migratory and native bird species. The Corn Creek Field Station has several spring-fed ponds and many types of vegetation. Consequently, this locality provides the Refuges' best opportunity to observe the greatest number of birds. Camping, backpacking, hiking and horseback riding are permitted year round with certain restrictions.

In 1975, approximately 1.3 million acres of land within Desert Range were proposed for wilderness designation under the Wilderness Act of 1964. The U.S. Congress has yet to act on this proposal and the area continues to be managed as "de facto" wilderness, in accordance with the Wilderness Act.

The Nellis Air Force Range (NAFR) overlays 846,000 acres of the western portion of the Refuge, and has been used since 1940 for testing armament and for training pilots in aerial warfare. The U.S. Air Force is authorized to have primary use of the NAFR, which is currently managed under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. Air Force and the Service. Under the MOU, the Service is the federal agency with primary responsibility for the welfare and management of the land. The U.S. Air Force controls access to the areas affected by the MOU, including the airspace above the land. Due to safety and other security concerns, this area is closed to all public entry.



Palm trees compete with the native fish species for precious water resources at Moapa.

■ MOAPA VALLEY

The primary management objectives at Moapa Valley are to restore the Refuge to as near a natural condition as possible and to optimize available stream habitat for recovery of the Moapa dace. This unique native fish lives out its life in the Warm Springs thermal spring complex which includes over 20 springs located within the Refuge.

Historic uses of the spring pools and the surrounding landscape for agricultural and recreational purposes have altered the habitat that the Moapa dace needs in order to survive. Prior to acquisition by the Service, the area had been developed and operated as a resort with thermal spring-fed swimming pools, bath houses, snack bar and recreational vehicle hook-ups. Restoring the pools and stream channels and planting appropriate vegetation will hedge against the loss of this rare fish species.

Moapa dace are found only in the Warm Springs area of northern Clark County, Nevada, and their outlet streams leading to the Moapa River. They are thermal endemics. That is, they originated in warm, isolated waters (79-90 degrees Fahrenheit) and are adapted to the peculiar living conditions of those regions. In the last decade, dace populations have declined due to habitat destruction and modification. During a snorkel survey conducted on February 8, 2000, on the Refuge and surrounding area, 893 Moapa dace were recorded.

Competition with introduced non-native species such as the mosquitofish, talapia and shortfin molly have also added to the dace's decline. Yet another native species and a Federally-listed candidate species, the Moapa White River springfish, compatibly coexists with the dace. Ongoing research will allow for innovative management strategies to be implemented to address species competition issues.

The Service faces another restoration and management challenge in the form of non-native palm trees which were planted by Moapa Valley settlers and the resort owners over the last century. While visually pleasing in the dry, scrubby Mojave Desert landscape, these trees are hardy drinkers consuming up to 300 gallons of water per day. Thus, the

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The Refuge Complex

Continued from page 6

native fish species must compete for life sustaining water. The palm trees also represent a real fire management hazard. Several fires over the last few decades have burned through the Refuge and wiped out significant numbers of the native fish species.

Currently, due to its small size, fragile habitats, on-going restoration work, and removal of unsafe structures, the Refuge is closed to the public. Scientists with Federal agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey, State agencies such as NDOW, and local conservation and community organizations are working with Service staff to restore the landscape and the habitat which is critical to the survival of the Moapa dace. Thanks to these cooperative efforts, the future looks brighter for the dace.

■ PAHRANAGAT

This Refuge was established to provide habitat for migratory birds, especially waterfowl. Additionally, the Service aims to maintain this unique wetlands system for all migratory and native species while providing compatible, wildlife-dependent public use opportunities. These include hunting, fishing, bird-watching, and providing interpretive and educational information on the Refuge's habitat, wildlife and cultural resources.

Pahranagat is a 44-mile long valley that is part of an ancient, well-preserved river course. A remarkable feature of the Refuge is its four "lakes" which are surrounded by cattail marshes, cottonwood and willow groves, and upland desert scrub. These water features are known as the North Marsh, Upper and Lower Pahranagat Lakes, and the Middle Marsh.

Pahranagat's waters originate from large springs to the north of the Refuge and are managed to obtain the most value for wildlife. The Refuge's various wetland habitats support many plants favored as food by over 230 species of migratory birds and other resident wildlife. These unique habitats make it an ideal and important stopping point for waterfowl and other migratory birds, and thus offer spectacular bird viewing opportunities year round.



Pahranagat's four water features are important habitat for migratory waterfowl and native wildlife.

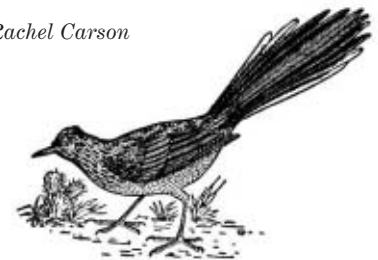
Bird abundance and diversity are highest during spring and fall migrations when large numbers of songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors are present. A variety of ducks and great blue herons can be found near the lakes, while black-necked stilts and American avocets are seen feeding in shallower waters. Greater sandhill cranes migrate through Pahranagat during the heart of winter. Red-tailed hawks, Northern harriers, Cooper's hawks, and bald and golden eagles are also winter visitors.

As water is valued and precious in the desert today, so it was for the Native Americans that made their homes and hunting camps throughout the Pahranagat Valley for thousands of years. Hundreds of cultural sites can be found within the Refuge and are managed through a cooperative partnership with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office as well as local preservation organizations. Black Canyon, a well-known cultural site containing large and unique rock art, rock shelters, and hunting/camping blinds, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Public use at the Refuge currently includes wildlife observation, hunting, camping, and picnicking. Waterfowl, dove, rabbit and quail hunting is permitted within designated areas mainly located at the Middle Pond and Lower Lake. Fishing for largemouth bass, bullheads and carp occurs at the North Marsh, Upper Lake, Middle Pond and Lower Lake. All fishing and hunting programs are managed in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

"Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."

Rachel Carson



What is a CCP?

When Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, it included a key provision that “wildlife comes first” on refuges.

The act provides the Service with guidance for managing refuges in a way that ensures the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Two important principles of the act are to maintain biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the refuge system, and facilitate compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.

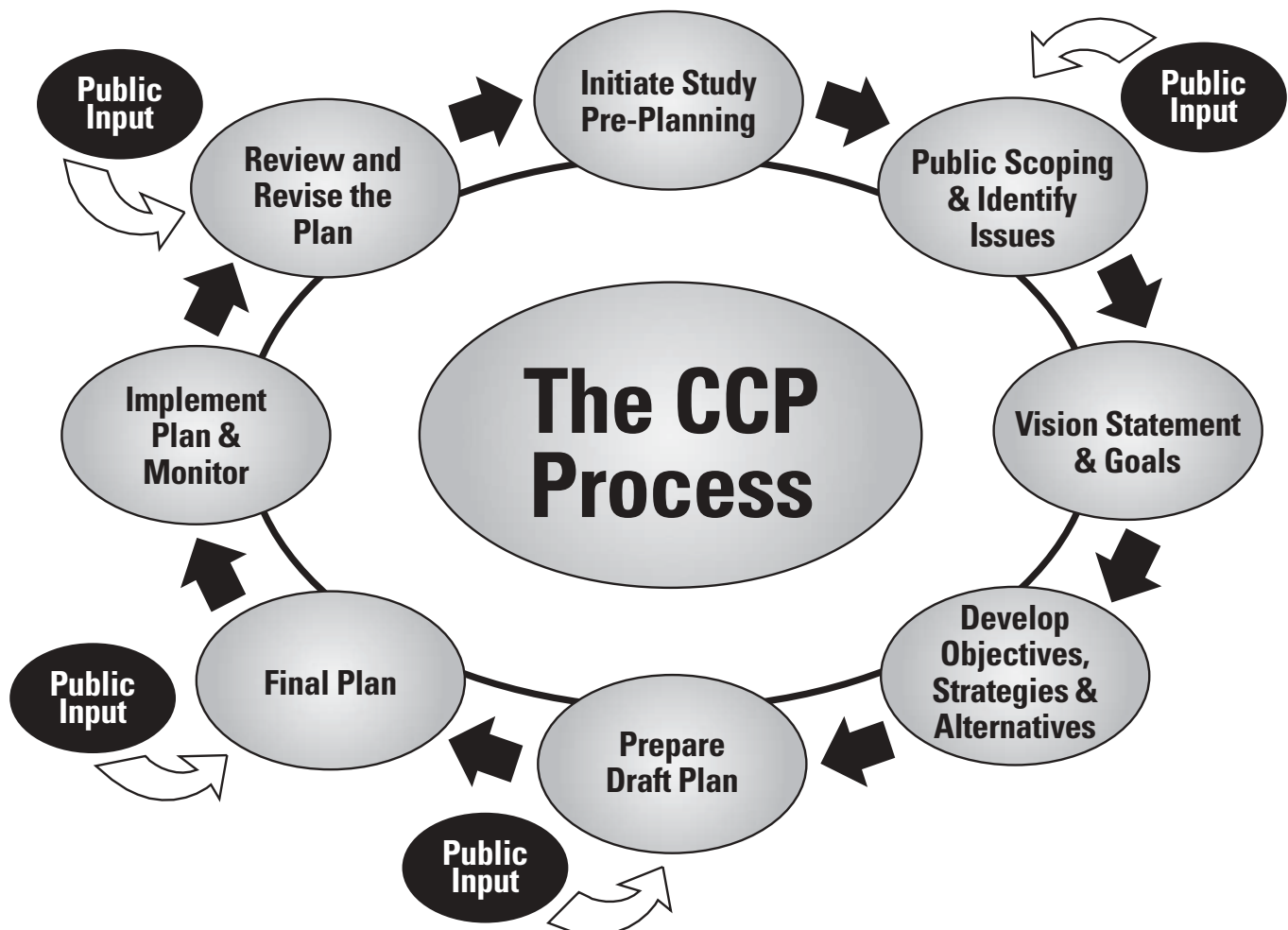
Every refuge will develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP). The CCP will outline goals, objectives, and management strategies for each refuge. It will be a flexible, “living” document that will be updated every 15 years.

The CCP:

- Ensures that management of the refuge reflects the purposes of the refuge and the mission, policies, and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System;
- Provides a vision statement for the refuge;
- Provides the public with an understanding of the reasons for management actions on the refuge;
- Ensures the compatibility of current and future uses of the refuge with its purposes;
- Provides long-term continuity in refuge management; and
- Provides budget justification for operation and maintenance, and facility-development requests.

The CCPs will provide broad management direction and guidance for the refuge. The accompanying environmental document(s), per the National Environmental Policy Act, will describe the alternatives considered and their environmental effects. You will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft CCPs and environmental document(s).

During Fall 2002 we will hold our first public scoping meetings to help identify issues and gather information. The key planning steps are listed below and will be listed in future updates so you can track our progress through the planning process.



Refuge Purposes

The purposes of the Complex are defined by language in a number of acts of Congress which grant the Service general authority to acquire land for the National Wildlife Refuges:

- **Ash Meadows** "... to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species ... or (B) plants ..." 16 U.S.C. §1534 (*Endangered Species Act of 1973*)

- **Desert Range** "... for the protection, enhancement, and maintenance of wildlife resources, including bighorn sheep ..." (*Public Land Order 4079, dated Aug. 31, 1966*)

"... to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species ... or (B) plants ..." 16 U.S.C. §1534 (*Endangered Species Act of 1973*)

"... suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species ..." 16 U.S.C. §460k-1

"... the Secretary ... may accept and use ... real ... property. Such acceptance may be accomplished under the terms and conditions of restrictive covenants imposed by donors ..." 16 U.S.C. §460k-2 (*Refuge Recreation Act* (16 U.S.C. §460k-460k-4), as amended)

- **Moapa Valley** "... to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species ... or (B) plants ..." 16 U.S.C. §1534 (*Endangered Species Act of 1973*)

- **Pahranagat** "... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." 16 U.S.C. §715d (*Migratory Bird Conservation Act*)



Sunset at Gass Peak on the Desert Range.

Compatibility of Refuge Uses

Prior to allowing various public uses on the refuge, federal law requires that the Service first determine that these specific uses are compatible. A compatible use is a proposed or existing use of a national wildlife refuge that, based on sound professional judgement of the refuge manager, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the National Wildlife Refuge System mission or the purposes of the refuge. Compatibility determinations are used to help evaluate such uses and will be integrated into each CCP document.

The refuge will complete compatibility determinations for existing or proposed public uses on each refuge as part of the CCP process.

"Suffice it to say that by common consent of thinking people, there are cultural values in the sports, customs, and experiences that renew contacts with wild things."

Aldo Leopold



Help us Plan the Future

During fall 2002 interested individuals, agencies, tribes, organizations, and other stakeholders will be invited to express their concerns and share their visions for the refuge. This will be your opportunity to help us identify issues and concerns, and for us to answer any questions you may have. Your comments and/or participation will be critical to the success of this planning effort.

Please check the CCP schedule below for the dates, times, and locations of the public scoping meetings. We look forward to seeing you there!

CCP Schedule Meeting Dates/Locations

Monday, September 16, 2002

Moapa Community Center
1340 E. Highway 168
Moapa, NV
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 17, 2002

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines
Las Vegas, NV
Interagency Conference
Rooms A & B
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 18, 2002

Amargosa Valley
Multi-purpose Building
821 East Amargosa Farm Road
Amargosa Valley, NV
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Bob Ruud Community Center
150 N. Highway 160
Pahrump, NV
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 19, 2002

Alamo Annex Building
100 South 1st West
Alamo, NV
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Please feel free to contact us!

*"Never doubt that a small,
thoughtful group of concerned
citizens can change the
world. Indeed, it is the only
thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead



We are available to provide additional information about the refuges' resources, visitor services, and accomplishments to date, and to answer any questions about the planning process. Feel free to call, write, e-mail, or come to see us.

If you did not receive this Planning Update through the mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please contact us.

If you would like to be removed from the list or are receiving multiple copies of these notices, please let us know.

Richard Birger, Project Leader

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
4701 N. Torrey Pines
Las Vegas, NV 89130
702.515.5450 phone
702.515.5460 fax
dick_birger@fws.gov

Mark Pelz, Refuge Planner

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
CA/NV Refuge Planning Office
2800 Cottage Way, W-1916
Sacramento, CA 95825
916.414.6504 phone
916.414.6512 fax
Mark_Pelz@fws.gov

Or check out the following sites on the Web:
<http://desertcomplex.fws.gov> and
<http://pacific.fws.gov/plan>

Please pass this Planning Update along to anyone you think might be interested in the planning process. Thank you!



CELEBRATING A
CENTURY
of CONSERVATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
4701 N. Torrey Pines
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130

Address correction requested

APPENDIX H

PROJECT SCOPING MAILING LIST

(Not available electronically - copy on file at Desert Complex Headquarters)

APPENDIX I

NEWS RELEASE AND RECIPIENTS

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Desert NWR Complex
4701 North Torrey Pines
Las Vegas, NV 89130

News Release



Contact: Richard Birger - (702) 515-5450

January 21, 2003

Public Comment Sought for Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex Planning Process

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is seeking assistance from the public in developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) to guide future management of Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Complex). The Complex is comprised of four refuges in southern Nevada: Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Desert National Wildlife Range, Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge. The CCP/EIS will determine a long-range management vision for the refuges including resource protection and management strategies, appropriate recreational uses, support facilities and programs.

The Service will hold a series of public meetings to collect public comments on issues, concerns and opportunities for future management of the refuges. The public scoping meetings will be held September 16 through September 19 at the following locations:

Sept. 16, 2002 7 - 9 pm	Moapa Community Center 1340 E. Highway 168 Moapa Valley, NV
Sept. 17, 2002 7 - 9 pm	Fish and Wildlife Service Office 4701 North Torrey Pines Las Vegas, NV
Sept. 18, 2002 4 - 6 pm	Amargosa Valley Multi-purpose Building 821 East Amargosa Farm Road Amargosa Valley, NV
Sept. 18, 2002 7 - 9 pm	Bob Ruud Community Center 150 N. Highway 160 Pahrump, NV
Sept. 19, 2002 7 - 9 pm	Alamo Annex Building 100 South 1 st West Alamo, NV

The Service will accept public comments until October 19, 2002, on the scope of issues that should be addressed in the CCP/EIS. Address comments, requests to be included on the project mailing list or receive a copy of the most recent Planning Update to: Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4701 North Torrey Pines, Las Vegas,

NV 89130 or call the Service/Complex at (702) 515-5450. Submit faxes to (702) 515-5460. For more information and/or to submit comments via electronic mail, visit <http://desertcomplex.fws.gov> and use the "CCP Planning Update" link to get to "Guest Mailbox" provided at that site.

The refuges in the Desert Complex represent some the best and the last of the Mojave Desert riparian and montane ecosystems with species of plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. The legacy of managing for wildlife first within these unique landscapes will allow for future generations to enjoy and be awed by these jewels of the desert. Thus, the Service's challenge is to conserve plants and animals living within the refuges and to seek compatible opportunity for visitors and local communities not only to enjoy and appreciate them, but to participate in their stewardship.

Ash Meadows NWR was established in 1984, to protect Federally-listed endangered plant and animal species. It consists of 23,488 acres located in Nye County, just north of the town of Pahrump, Nevada. Ash Meadows lies within a half hour drive southeast of Death Valley National Park, California. The refuge provides habitat for at least 24 plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. Four fish and one plant are currently listed as endangered.

Desert National Wildlife Range was established in 1936, for the preservation and management of desert bighorn sheep and their habitat. Encompasses 1.5 million acres of the diverse Mojave Desert in Clark and Lincoln Counties, Nevada, it is the largest National Wildlife Refuge in the lower 48 states. The Range contains six major mountain ranges, the highest rising from 2,500-foot valleys to nearly 10,000 feet. It shares its southern border with the cities of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas.

Moapa Valley NWR was established in 1979, to secure and protect habitat for the endangered Moapa dace. It is comprised of 106 acres and is located approximately 60 miles from Las Vegas in northeastern Clark County, Nevada. The refuge is part of a unique thermal spring system that is part of the headwaters of the Muddy River system which flows into Lake Mead to the southeast.

Pahranagat NWR was established on August 16, 1963, to provide habitat for migratory birds and especially waterfowl. It is comprised of 5,380 acres of marshes, meadows, lakes and upland desert habitat and is located in Lincoln County, Nevada. The refuge is an important stopping point for waterfowl and other migratory birds as well as visitors traveling on US Highway 93 to and from Las Vegas. Numerous recreational opportunities are available at Pahranagat, including wildlife observation, fishing, hunting, camping, and picnicking.

- FWS -

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses nearly 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement Press Release for First Public Scoping Meetings September 16 to 19, 2002	
Business Name	Individual Notice Sent to:
Alamo Annex Building	Marge Davis
Associated Press – Las Vegas	Tom Tait
Channel 1 – TV Las Vegas	Bob Stoldal
Channel 13 – TV	Mark Liu
Channel 15 – TV	Erick Muller
Channel 3 – TV	Jamie Oats
Channel 5 – TV Fox News	Kathleen Sullivan
Channel 5 – TV Fox News	Assignment Editor
Channel 8 – TV	Eric Dahrensburg
City Life Newspaper	Editor
Desert Research Institute	Dr. Colleen Beck
Friends of Red Rock	Jay Bartos
Howard Hughes Corporation	Tom Warden
L.A. Times – Las Vegas Bureau	Tom Gorman
Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce	Catherine Levy
Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce	Mike Varney
Las Vegas Convention and Visitor Authority	Rob Powers
Las Vegas One	Dick Tuining
Las Vegas Review Journal	Keith Rogers
Las Vegas Review Journal	John Gurzinski – photographer
Las Vegas Review Journal	Kevin Cannon
Las Vegas Sun	Metro Editor
Las Vegas Sun	Mary Manning

**Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

**Press Release for First Public Scoping Meetings
September 16 to 19, 2002**

Business Name	Individual Notice Sent to:
Las Vegas Sun	Susan Snyder
Las Vegas Sun	Diana Sahagun
Library – Clark County	Public Services
Library – Enterprise	Judith Gray
Library – Green Valley	Sally Feldman
Library – Las Vegas	
Library – Mesquite	
Library – Pahrump Community	
Library – Rainbow	Jane Richardson
Library – Sahara West	Kim Clanton-Green
Library – Spring Valley	Marsha Cutler
Library – Summerlin	Kelly Richards
Library – Sunrise	Beryl Andrus-Zundel
Library – West Charleston	Nancy French
Library – West Las Vegas	Felton Thomas
Library – Whitney	Barb Carey
Library – Las Vegas Marketing Director	Patricia Marvel
Lincoln County	Doug Carriger
Moapa Community Center	Tara
Nellis Air Force Base	Public Affairs
Nevada Congress – Governor Guinn	Bud A. Cranor
Nevada State Lands	Pam Wilcox
Nye County Commission	Jeff Taguchi
Outdoor Writer, TV/Radio Host	Barb Henderson

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement Press Release for First Public Scoping Meetings September 16 to 19, 2002	
Business Name	Individual Notice Sent to:
Outside Las Vegas Foundation	Isabel Beaumone-Frenette
Outside Las Vegas Foundation	Alan O'Neill
Outside Las Vegas Foundation	Thalia Dondero
Pahrump Bob Ruud Community Center	Cookie Wastphal
Pahrump Town Board	Tim Leavitt
Pahrump Valley Times	Henry Brean
Pahrump Valley View	Mark Waite
Sierra Club	Deanna White
Telemundo	Claudia Retana
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	Bob Johnson
U.S. Congress – Congressman Jim Gibbons	Judy Ray
U.S. Congress – Congresswoman Shelly Berkley	Tod J. Story
U.S. Congress – Senator Harry Reid	Jerry L. Reynoldson
U.S. Congress – Senator John Ensign	Sonia Joya
U.S. Forest Service	District Ranger – Las Vegas
U.S. Lake Mead National Recreation Area	Bill Dickinson

APPENDIX J

NEWSPAPER PUBLICATION

(Available at http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2002/Oct-21-Mon-2002/new/19878374.html)

APPENDIX K

PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT SHEET



**PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR
THE COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN/
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
DESERT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX**

**If would like to make a comment or be added to our mailing list,
please fill out this card and hand it to any of our staff or please mail it to us. You
may also write us a letter or send e-mail to: dick_birger@fws.gov. Thank you!**

COMMENT:

NAME: _____

PHONE (Optional): _____

ADDRESS (Optional): _____

PLEASE ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST: YES NO

Place First
Class Stamp
Here



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
4701 N. Torrey Pines
Las Vegas, NV 89130

APPENDIX L

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS

(Not available electronically - copy on file at Desert Complex Headquarters)

APPENDIX M

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY TABLE

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Public Scoping Written Comments Summary Table

Date Attended/ Comment Received	Name/Address	Comment
8-30-02 letter to FWS	Len H. Carpenter, Field Representative Wildlife Management Institute Ft. Collins, CO	<p>The Service should be sure that the state wildlife agency is a full partner is developing the CCPs. Refuge hunting and trapping regulations should mirror state regulations unless there is adequate evidence of negative impacts to wildlife resources or wildlife dependent recreational activities as a major component of the refuge programs as appropriate under founding authorities. The planning process should also be open and provide for meaningful feedback to the public as the process continues.</p> <p>Issues: no particular order</p> <p>Provisions in the Plan should be made to prevent invasive species from becoming established, determine if invasive species are a problem, and if so, to identify appropriate management responses.</p> <p>Research opportunities should be identified that the refuges can support without adversely impacting biological resources or wildlife-dependent recreation.</p> <p>In as much as possible the CCP and accompanying NEPA documents should be developed independent of the budget process in that it is most important in the Plan to first identify the priority items that must be accomplished and then assign the budget costs in a priority manner to get the work done.</p> <p>Off and on-site educational/interpretative opportunities should be identified in cooperation with other federal agencies, state and local governments. The Plan should specify what effect expanded public uses would have on existing wildlife populations and distribution.</p> <p>The Plan should address restoration, protection, and enhancement of refuge habitats needed to sustain healthy populations of native fish and wildlife.</p> <p>The Plan must identify significant problems which may adversely affect populations of wildlife on the refuge.</p> <p>Priority should be given to monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management with respect to activities identified in the Plan.</p> <p>The Plan should address restoration of native threatened and endangered species on refuge lands.</p> <p>The Plan should provide for development of a database of pertinent scientific information regarding refuge habitats and wildlife.</p> <p>The Plan should provide for quality consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife-dependent use on all the refuges.</p> <p>The Plan should address how existing plans for adjacent managed lands (state, federal, private) will be considered in providing a consistent approach to common objectives.</p> <p>Active management to benefit wildlife should be addressed, including fire, stream restoration, weed control, and road closures.</p> <p>The methods, intensity, and purpose of livestock grazing that will be permitted on the refuges must be presented in the Plan.</p>

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Public Scoping Written Comments Summary Table

Date Attended/ Comment Received	Name/Address	Comment
	Len Carpenter, Wildlife Management Institute (cont.)	Measures needed to maintain or restore water quantity and quality should be addressed in the Plan. The Plan should address the relationship with any existing ecosystem and/or watershed efforts being implemented by other agencies in the refuge planning areas. The Plan should address fire management on the refuges and discuss how management of vegetation, especially exotic species like cheat grass will be done.
9-17-02 Comment Card	Sallie Clinard Las Vegas, NV	Some wildlife refuges allow ATV and other OHV use. Please consider this legitimate way to visit the refuge, especially the Desert National Range. Do not assume that ATV's disturb wildlife anymore than licensed vehicles, hikers, or horse riders. Areas proposed as wilderness can be better protected if not under wilderness designation.
9-17-02 Comment Card	Mike Albrecht Las Vegas, NV	I would like to see the wilderness areas from 1974 opened up to public access. Allowing this and future generations the opportunity to observe and enjoy these areas. This also means allowing motorized access, both registered street legal and OHV access. Allow human contact with water sources in the Desert and mountain areas.
9-17-02 Comment Card	Gary Clinard Las Vegas, NV	I would like to see the Desert National Wildlife Range's existing roads and trails to be open to OHV's (Jeeps, ATV's) so that these legitimate users can enjoy these public lands. Also, I am totally opposed to any wilderness designations in the refuge. Wilderness designation would tie the hands of the wildlife manager, severely limit the usefulness of the area, and turn the area into a "land of no uses".
9-17-02 Comment Card	Cathey Adamsen Las Vegas, NV	Some wildlife areas allow off-road vehicles, with no detriment to the wildlife. The use of ATV's is a legal and legitimate recreational sport, so I feel we should be allowed to visit and ride in these areas. We are respectful of all wildlife and stay on existing roads, without disturbing wildlife any more than hikers, horse riders or Jeeps.
9-17-02 Comment Card	Robert Jay Las Vegas, NV	It is important to address ways to allow ATV's to access the Desert National Range. Viewing wildlife and nature in general is a wonderful experience. ATV's do not disturb the lands and wildlife if there are marked trails - same as for horses, bicycles and hikers.

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Public Scoping Written Comments Summary Table

Date Attended/ Comment Received	Name/Address	Comment
9-16-02 e-mail	Jeremy Garncarz Friends of Nevada Wilderness Las Vegas, NV	Friends of Nevada Wilderness looks forward to participating in the CCP process, beginning in the Fall of 2002. We view this process to be very important to the future of the DNWR Complex. As the CCP process moves forward we hope that a number of issues will be addressed. This issues include: a) potential Wilderness designation within the DNWR Complex; b) assurance that potential Wilderness areas are not managed in such a way that would jeopardize the potential Wilderness designation; c) mineral withdrawal for the DNWR Complex; and d) addressing the fact that wildlife management and Wilderness can go hand-in-hand and do not conflict with each other.
9-19-02 Comment Card	Dr. James Marble	Crystal Reservoir - Road county owned want to pave - dust/safety tine in w/ bratty habitat trails project, Lathrop Wells, etc., (NV important bird area program?)
9-23-02 Comment Card	Allan Pritcher Overton, NV	Water - try to obtain water for Pahrnatagat to keep the lakes full and the D/U ponds damp (very important). Campgrounds - longer stay times - 14 days too short. Do your best to start a spraying and clean-up program for mosquito control which is critical <u>now</u> . Open VP campgrounds on the other side of the lake and try to make campers police their own areas. Hire a person who is sensitive to R/V RJ(?) and can be an ombudsman between the two. Do a survey - which has all the concerns for hunters-fisherman-R/V's and campers. (temporary).
9-23-02 Comment Card	Glen Franke Henderson, NV	I would like to know the impact of four wheel drive and ATV, on the environment of the refuges. Taking into account air pollution, noise, fire and damage to vegetation. Also the use of these vehicle to traverse in close areas. Plus I would like to see a better job done at Pahrnatagat NWR. There has been little or no work done to manage this for migratory birds. The managers at this complex have come and gone. Each one doing as little as he can before moving on. I would like to see more accountability for the manager before they move on or get promoted to a new complex.

APPENDIX N

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

*(Not available electronically - copy on file at Desert Complex Headquarters
See Appendix B for summary)*

APPENDIX O

INTERAGENCY LETTER NOTICE OF COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN PROCESS INITIATION

(Not available electronically - copy on file at Desert Complex Headquarters)

APPENDIX P

INTERAGENCY SCOPING MEETING INVITATION LETTER

August 16, 2002

ADDRESS;

Dear:

You are invited to participate in an Interagency Scoping meeting sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on Wednesday, August 28, 2002, from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be held in the Interagency Conference rooms A and B at the Service headquarters located at 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive.

The Service contacted the (agency) in April 2002 regarding the development of Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex (DNWRC). The DNWRC is comprised of four National Wildlife Refuges located in southern Nevada: Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (AHME), Desert National Wildlife Range (DESI), Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MOVA) and Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge (PAHR).

The (agency) has responsibility for or special interest in refuge resources and/or land use management strategies which are being assessed as a part of the CCPs/EIS process. These plans will help guide overall refuge management over the next 15 years and your ideas and comments will be an important part of the process.

The agenda for this meeting will include:

1. General background information on the CCP/EIS process.
2. Scoping issues and concerns relative to the (agency)'s responsibilities in and adjacent to the four affected refuges.
3. Data collection and information sharing.
4. Coordination and commitment of interested agencies in developing the CCPs/EIS over the next 24 months.

In accordance with Service CCP policy and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a Notice of Intent (NOI) describing the CCPs/EIS process will be published in the Federal Register on August 21, 2002. The NOI has been prepared and published to advise other agencies and the public of the Service's intentions to engage in a CCP process for the DNWRC and develop an EIS. Additionally; the NOI explains how public comments and suggestions will be solicited as well as where to obtain information on the issues which could be addressed in the CCPs/EIS. Public scoping meetings are scheduled for the week of September 16 - 19, 2002, in Las Vegas, Pahrump, Amargosa Valley, Moapa Valley, and Alamo, Nevada.

The (agency) is invited to participate in assisting the Service during the scoping of issues, development of alternatives to the Proposed Action, and review of the development of the CCPs/EIS. The _____'s participation in developing the CCPs/EIS is important to the future of the DNWRC. Attached is a brief background on the mandate for the CCP process and a questionnaire that we invite you to review and fill out prior to the meeting. If you are unable to attend, please mail the questionnaire to Kim Hutson, Project Manager, SWCA, 2820 West Charleston Boulevard, Suite 15, Las Vegas, NV 89102. Questions and comments may be directed to Kim at 702-248-3880 ext. 228 or by email at khutson@swca.com.

Your reply is respectfully requested by August 23, 2002.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Birger
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Region
Project Leader, Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89130
Ph: (702) 515-5450
Fax: (702) 515-5460
e-mail: dick_birger@fws.gov

CC: Kim Hutson, SWCA, Inc.



Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plans Background

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and NEPA require Federal agencies to integrate the NEPA process with other planning efforts at the earliest possible time to provide a systematic interdisciplinary approach; identify and analyze the environmental effects of their actions; describe appropriate alternatives to the proposal; involve the affected State and Federal agencies and fully integrate all refuge proposals that may have an impact on the environment with the provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1501.2).

The involvement of an Interagency Scoping/Planning Team will assist the Service in meeting CEQ and NEPA mandates as well as ensure that the CCPs/EIS support the vision and mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

In 1997, Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act and directed the Service to manage the Refuge System as a national system of lands and waters in a way that ensures the long term conservation of wildlife and maintains the biological integrity of ecosystems. This law requires the Service to initiate comprehensive conservation planning for each refuge. It also stated that certain wildlife-dependent recreational uses are appropriate activities on refuges and strengthened the compatibility determination process for assuring that these activities do not conflict with refuge management and goals.

In accordance with the Improvement Act, the CCPs will outline goals, objectives and management strategies for the refuges that comprise the DNWRC. This is a flexible document that will be updated every 15 years. The CCP will provide broad management direction and guidance for the refuge, contingent upon future funding and resources, and is designed to:

1. Ensure that management of the refuge reflects the purposes of the refuge and the mission, policies, and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
2. Provide the public with an understanding of the reasons for management actions on the refuge.
3. Provide a vision statement for the refuge.
4. Ensures the compatibility of current and future uses of the refuge with its purposes.
5. Provide long-term continuity in refuge management.
6. Provide budget justification for operation and maintenance and facility development requests.

Prior to allowing various public uses on the refuge, federal law requires that the Service first determine that these specific uses are compatible. A compatible use is a proposed or existing use of a national wildlife refuge that, based on sound professional judgement of the refuge manager, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the National Wildlife Refuge System mission or the purposes and goals of the refuge. Compatibility determinations are used to help evaluate such uses and will be integrated as part of the CCP document. The refuges will each complete compatibility determinations for any existing or proposed future public uses within the refuge as part of the CCP process.

APPENDIX Q

INTERAGENCY SCOPING MEETING INFORMATION PACKET

(Not available electronically - copy on file at Desert Complex Headquarters)

APPENDIX R

INTERAGENCY RESPONSE FORM

**Response Form for the Interagency Scoping Meeting
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plans/Environmental Impact Statement**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service invites you to share with us your agency's needs and concerns regarding resources protection, use and land management strategies and how various activities or practices could affect the mission of the refuge system. Providing this information is strictly optional and not a requirement for attending or participating in the Interagency Scoping Meeting.

AGENCY: _____
REPRESENTATIVE: _____

1. Which of the four refuges does your agency have an interest in or responsibility for?

Ash Meadows

Desert Range

Moapa Valley

Pahranagat

2. What resources (animal, vegetable, mineral) does your agency have an interest in or responsibility for? Please explain/describe:

3. Explain the relationship between your agency and it's responsibilities and the DNWRC (e.g., legal agreements such as MOU/MOA, etc.).

4. What kinds of resources can you lend to the scoping/planning process? Please specify management plans, legal documents, resources data/survey reports, digital mapping data, etc.

**Response Form for the Interagency Scoping Meeting
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Comprehensive Conservation Plans/Environmental Impact Statement**

5. What level of commitment/involvement are you able/willing to provide to this scoping/planning process?

6. Would you be willing/interested in participating in the Public Scoping Meetings?

7. What public use or conservation organizations does your agency coordinate with relative to DNWRC resources and land management?

Please provide us with any other comments, concerns, suggestions in the space below or the backside of this page.

APPENDIX S

INTERAGENCY WRITTEN COMMENTS

*(Not available electronically - copy on file at Desert Complex Headquarters
See Appendix D)*